

**Revised and
Improved**

A New Accurate
Translation
of the Greek

NEW TESTAMENT

into simple

Everyday American English



Julian G. Anderson

With Notes and Illustrations for Study

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Translation
of the Greek

NEW TESTAMENT

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Everyday American English



Julian
Anderson is a retired
professor of classical and Biblical
Greek, Seminary professor,
Lutheran pastor, and successful
publisher of Bible study
materials.

This translation has short, easy words instead of big ones, and short clear sentences. Yet it's the most exact translation available. The reason is the author's new method. He takes apart the long Greek sentences and rearranges the

parts into short, natural English sentences. 23 illustrations, hundreds of notes on difficult words or passages, pictures of ancient coins, cross-references, and 4 maps make this a study edition which students of all ages can understand.

GETTING STARTED RIGHT

Reading the Bible is one thing,
Understanding what you read is another.
To understand better, begin like this -

	<u>Page</u>
1. Gospel of John, all of it	257-327
2. Letter to the Romans, 1-8	423-443
3. Letter to the Ephesians, 1-5	539-549
4. Letter to the Galatians, 1-4	525-535
5. 1st Letter to the Corinthians, 15	492-497
6. " " " " " 13	488-489
7. Letter to the Hebrews	609-636
8. Gospel of Luke	157-256
9. The Acts of Jesus' Apostles	328-422
10. Then read the rest, starting with the other letters.	

There are helpful notes on pages 728 to 874. These notes are marked by a little * after certain words (see page 1, the * in the first line of the title - Matthew*, and the first line of verse 1 - Messiah*). To find the note turn to pages 728-874, and find the book you are looking for and the verse number to match the place where the * is. Quite a few notes are repeated, since the words are found in many places. And after the first time, the note will read "See note at Matthew 1:1" etc. Then turn back to that note.

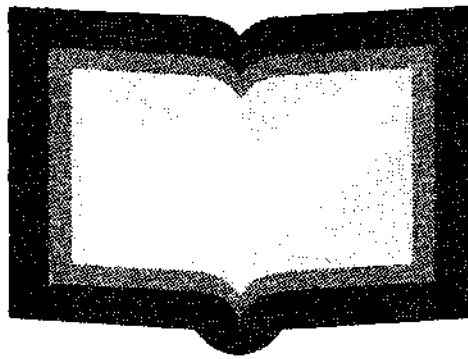
To find the order of the different books, look on page iii (in front). On page iv you will find the pages for the pictures of things which are no longer used in our world. And on page v are the pages for the coins used in Jesus' day, and four maps. And may the Lord bless your reading!

SPECIAL NOTE - If you find help for your spiritual problems in this book and wish to say "thanks" by sending a gift, as many do, please send it to my prison ministry, which now sends out over 1,500 free New Testaments a month to prisons all over America. Make out your tax exempt check to Special Ministries Board, SAD, WELS, and send it to Bethany Lutheran Church, 264 Evergreen Road, N. Ft. Myers, FL 33903.

A New Accurate
Translation
of the Greek

NEW TESTAMENT

into simple
Everyday American English



With introduction, maps,
pictures, illustrations, cross-references,
and explanatory notes
for further study.

By the Rev. Julian G. Anderson

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The four gospels were really advertising pieces, written to convince the people of the first century that Jesus was God's true Son who had been sent to save the whole world from sin and death. But each one gives a slightly different picture of Jesus.

The first three gospels all give a somewhat similar picture of Jesus and His life and work in Galilee. Matthew wrote to convince the Jews that Jesus was their promised Messiah. Mark however pictures Jesus as a man of action and power as he wrote to convince the Romans that Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. And Luke pictures Jesus as a Savior who was concerned for all men and women of all nationalities, as he wrote to convince the Greeks and the Greek-speaking people of all nations that Jesus was a universal Savior. But these three writers tell us nothing about Jesus' visits to Jerusalem, except for the last Passover Festival when He was put on the cross. Matthew and Luke also tell us a good deal about what Jesus taught, both of them picturing Him as a far more effective teacher than the world has ever seen.

The first part of John's gospel is completely different from the first three. He describes only two incidents in Galilee which are reported in the synoptic gospels. But he tells us about Jesus' work and activities in Jerusalem and Judea at five festivals, including the last Passover. And John tells us about only a handful of things that Jesus did. He writes mainly about Jesus' conversations, or arguments, with the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. He pictures Jesus as a forceful and powerful figure who battled single-handedly against the whole power structure of the Jewish leaders, and completely defeated them. And as he does so, he describes Jesus in many very original and interesting ways, as the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Good Shepherd, the Door, the Vine, and the Light of the world, to mention a few. And thus we see that John wasn't writing for any particular group of people, but for all people, and especially for the Church, which was then 60 years old.

Why another translation?

My answer is simple and I hope convincing. First, because with all of our hundred or more English translations, there is still no perfect translation of the original Greek into English. And secondly, because there is still no translation in simple everyday American English that everyone, including our children, can understand.

Every serious Bible reader knows that there are many places where the King James Version and all its direct descendant revisions - ERV, ASV, RSV, NIV - translate the Greek incorrectly. First then, I have tried to correct as many of these inaccuracies as possible.

And every Bible reader is painfully aware of the fact that the KJV and its children have a decided preference for long words, including many that only the pastors and professors understand. Second then, I have tried to get rid of all such big technical words, and use short, simple English words, so that the average Bible reader with a minimum education, and the school children can understand what God has to say to them.

And every Bible reader is also aware of the KJV's family habit of translating the Greek text word for word, so that the reader has some English words in some ancient Greek sentences, which are so long and confusingly complicated that the meaning becomes unclear. Third then, I have taken the long Greek sentences apart and rearranged the clauses and phrases into the same short, clear English sentences we use in our everyday conversation. In this I have followed Martin Luther's guiding principle - "Whoever would speak German must not use the Hebrew idiom. When he has the German words that serve the purpose . . . then let him freely express the sense in the best German words he is capable of using."

In short, my aim has been to put God's Word into such simple, everyday American English that the average school child of 11 or 12 and up who is using my

Bible study workbooks, and the average church member who is not a college graduate can all understand it. In this respect I am simply following in the footsteps of William Tyndale, the first and greatest of all English translators, who said, "If God spares my life, ere many years I will cause the boy that drives the plough to know more scripture than the doctors do" (1525).

These principles I have followed are those which the Holy Spirit used when He inspired the apostles and evangelists to write in the common (koiné) language of their day, which was spoken and used by the common people. And the only proper translation of such common Greek is to use common everyday American English. And the use of such common everyday English is really the most accurate way of translating the Greek New Testament, although it differs considerably from the learned, scholarly English of the King James translators and their modern counterparts. Of course, at times a phrase may be necessary to translate a single Greek word, but this is true and proper paraphrasing.

In other cases a picture is necessary to illustrate the meaning of some Greek word which describes an article or action which no longer exists in our modern 20th-century world. There are 36 of these word pictures in the text. Four maps will also help the reader to locate all places mentioned. And finally, numerous helpful notes are added in a separate section to help the reader understand more difficult words and customs of the Biblical world of Jesus' day.

This book is the result of 25 years of study and work in my chosen field. And I must add that I am certainly not claiming to have produced the perfect translation, for such a thing is an impossible goal to reach. And I am very much aware of the many places where I have failed to reach that goal. But I pray that this translation will point future translators in the right direction, and help them to come still closer to the final goal.

And now I must thank those who have encouraged

me to go on, and helped me along the way. In particular I must thank Prof. Lars Lillehei, sainted teacher at Augsburg College, Minneapolis, for giving me such a solid start in the study of Greek, which has been my great interest ever since, and for arousing that interest in my heart. Secondly I must thank Dr. Donald C. Swanson, Professor of Classics and Linguistics at the University of Minnesota, for his thorough and enlightening instruction in comparative linguistics, with special reference to ancient Greek.

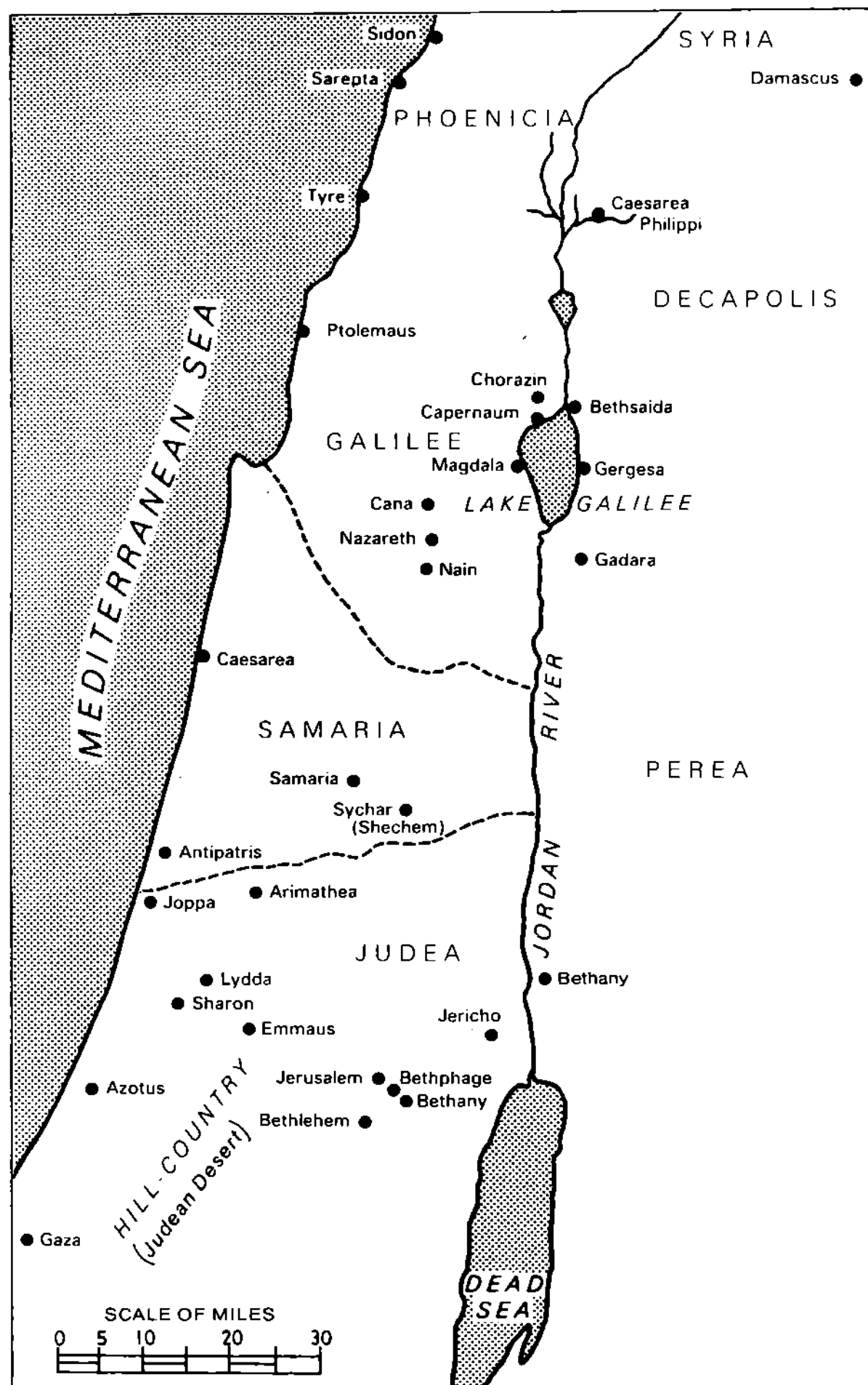
For all the art work and maps I must thank Howard Burgdorf, President of RKB Studios in Minneapolis, who has been my close friend for 35 years.

But finally I must thank my four children and their husbands and wives, for their continued and unfailing interest and encouragement in this project, especially Mrs. Diane Bean and Mrs. Leslie Nelson, who have helped with the final proofreading, and offered many valuable suggestions.

And of course I am most thankful for my dear wife LaTona (Tony), who is my special treasure and most suitable helper, without whose continued help and encouragement this project would never have materialized. She has taken care of my health and children, prepared numerous typed copies over the years, and has prepared all the camera-ready copy of this book for the printer, and offered many valuable suggestions, too numerous to count.

But the greatest thanks must go to our gracious God, - the Father, who has created me and given me my mind and all my abilities, and the Son, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me with His holy, precious blood, and the Holy Spirit, who has called me to faith and also to serve my Lord and Savior. To that Triune God belongs all the glory, honor and praise.

Julian G. Anderson
March 1984



THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO MATTHEW*

(Written in Jerusalem, about 45 A.D.)

Jesus' Family History

¹ This is the family history of Jesus the Messiah,* who was a descendant of David. And David was a descendant of Abraham.

² Abraham's son was **Isaac**; Isaac's son was **Jacob**; Jacob's sons were **Judah** and his brothers; ³ Judah's sons were **Perez** and Zerah, and Tamar was their mother; Perez's son was **Hezron**; Hezron's son was **Aram**; ⁴ Aram's son was **Amminadab**; Amminadab's son was **Nahshon**; Nahshon's son was **Salmon**; ⁵ Salmon's son was **Boaz**, and Rahab was his mother; Boaz's son was **Obed**, and Ruth was his mother; Obed's son was **Jesse**; ⁶ and Jesse's son was King **David**.

David's son was **Solomon**, and Uriah's wife was his mother; ⁷ Solomon's son was **Rehoboam**; Rehoboam's son was **Abijah**; Abijah's son was **Asa**; ⁸ Asa's son was **Jehoshaphat**; Jehoshaphat's son was **Joram**; Joram's son was **Uzziah**; ⁹ Uzziah's son was **Jotham**; Jotham's son was **Ahaz**; Ahaz's son was **Hezekiah**; ¹⁰ Hezekiah's son was **Manasseh**; Manasseh's son was **Amon**; Amon's son was **Josiah**; ¹¹ and Josiah's sons were **Jehoiachin** and his brothers at the time when the people of Judah were taken to Babylon.

¹² After the people of Judah were taken to Babylon Jehoiachin's son was **Shealtiel**; Shealtiel's son was **Zerubbabel**; ¹³ Zerubbabel's son was **Abiud**; Abiud's son was **Eliakim**; Eliakim's son was **Azor**; ¹⁴ Azor's son was **Zadok**; Zadok's son was **Achim**; Achim's son was **Eliud**; ¹⁵ Eliud's son was **Eleazar**; Eleazar's son was **Matthan**; Matthan's son was **Jacob**; ¹⁶ Jacob's son was **Joseph**, who was Mary's husband; and Mary was

*Helpful notes for Matthew begin on page 728

the mother of **Jesus**, who is called the Messiah.

17 And so there were fourteen ancestors from Abraham to David, and fourteen from David to the time when the Jews were taken to Babylon, and fourteen from the time they were taken to Babylon to the Messiah.

The Birth of Jesus

5/6 B.C.

18 And this is how Jesus the Messiah* was born. His mother Mary had been given to Joseph as his promised wife. But before they had begun to live together as man and wife, the Holy Spirit made Mary pregnant. And soon her husband Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a child.

19 Joseph was a man who always tried to do what was right. But he didn't want people to think that Mary was a bad woman either. So he decided to give her a divorce without telling anyone what had happened.

20 But after Joseph had decided to do this, a strange thing happened. One of the Lord's angels appeared to him in a dream, and said to him, "Joseph, you're a descendant of David. Don't be afraid to take your wife Mary home with you, because the child inside of her comes from the Holy Spirit. **21** Mary is going to have a little boy; and you must call him 'Jesus',* because He's the one who will save His people from their sins."

22 All this happened so that what the Lord had said through the prophet would come true -

23 "Listen to me!

A young girl who is a virgin

will become pregnant

and have a little boy,

and they will call Him 'Emmanuel',"+

which means "God is with us".+

24 So when Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. He took his wife home with

+Verses quoted in Matthew are on page 875

him, ²⁵but he never slept with her as man and wife until her little boy was born. And then Joseph named Him 'Jesus'.

Some Men from the East Come to Jerusalem 5 B.C.

²Jesus was born in Bethlehem,* in the district of Judea, during the time when Herod* was the king. And some time later a strange thing happened. Some men who lived in the east arrived in Jerusalem. They were called magoi,* ²and they asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the King of the Jews? You see, we saw His star* when it first appeared, and we have come to worship Him."

³When King Herod heard this, he became very excited, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. ⁴So Herod called together all the head priests and scribes* of the Jews and asked them where the Messiah* was going to be born.

⁵They answered, "In Bethlehem, in the district of Judea, for this is what the Bible says, where the Lord is speaking through the prophet -

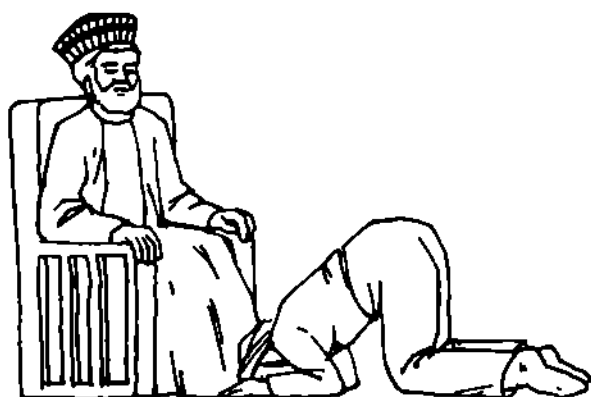
⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah -
you are not in any way the least among the leading
cities of Judah,
for it is from you that the Leader will come'+
'who will be the Shepherd of My people Israel' "+

⁷Then Herod called the magoi to a secret meeting and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸And then he sent them to Bethlehem and told them, "Go and find out everything you can about this child. And when you find him, come back and tell me, so that I can also go and worship him,"

^{9a}So when the magoi had gotten their information from the king, they started out. And then another strange thing happened. Suddenly there was the star which they had seen in the east, moving along ahead of them. ¹⁰And when they saw it, they were as happy as anyone could possibly be, ^{9b}and they followed the star until it stopped and stood over the place where

the child was.

11When they went into the house, they saw the child with His mother Mary, and they fell on their knees with their foreheads on the ground and worshiped Him.* Then they opened up their boxes and gave Him their gifts - gold, and fine sweet-smelling incense, and myrrh.*



SHOWING RESPECT
TO AN IMPORTANT PERSON

12But then God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod; and so they went back to their country by another road.

Joseph Takes His Family into Egypt 4 B.C.

13After the magoi had left, another strange thing happened. One of the Lord's angels appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up!" said the angel. "And take your child and His mother and get out of here! Go to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to come back. You see, Herod is going to be looking for this child to kill Him."

14So Joseph got up and took his child and His mother and started out for Egypt during the night. **15**And they stayed in Egypt until Herod died,* so that what the Lord had said through the prophet would come true, where it says,

"I called My Son out of Egypt".⁺

Herod Kills All the Baby Boys in Bethlehem

16Later, when Herod realized that the magoi had played a trick on him, he became terribly angry. But the magoi had told him the date when Jesus was born. So he sent out his soldiers and killed all the boys two years old and under who were living in Bethlehem, and in all the farms and villages around Bethlehem. **17**So then what the Lord had said through the prophet Jeremiah came true -

18 "A voice is heard in Ramah,
crying and sobbing and saying how sad she feels.
It's Rachel, crying for her children;
but nothing will make her feel any better,
because they're all dead".⁺

Joseph and His Family Return to Israel 3 B.C.

19 But when Herod died, the Lord's angel appeared again in a dream to Joseph, who was still in Egypt.
20 "Get up!" said the angel, "and take your child and His mother and go back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill this child are dead."

21 So Joseph got up and took the child and His mother and went back to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Herod's son Archelaus had taken his father's place as the king of Judea, Joseph was afraid to go back there. And after God warned him in a dream, he left Judea and went to the district of Galilee, 23 and made his home in a town named Nazareth,* so that what the Lord said through the prophets would come true -

"He will be called a Nazorite".^{+*}

John the Baptist Begins His Work

Spring. 26

3 Some time later* John the Baptist went into the desert part of Judea,* spreading his message and saying, 2 "You must change your minds and your way of living, because the Kingdom of Heaven is here!"
3 You see, John was the man the Lord was talking about through the prophet Isaiah, where He said,

"Someone's voice is calling out in the desert,

'Get the Lord's highway ready!

Make His roads straight!'"⁺

4 This man John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and he ate locusts* and wild honey. 5 And when he appeared, people from Jerusalem and all over Judea, and all around the Jordan river went out to hear him. 6 And as they confessed their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan river.

7And when he saw a lot of Pharisees* and Sadducees* coming to him to be baptized, he said to them, "You're a nest of rattlesnakes! Who warned you that you should try to escape from God's holy anger which is coming?"

8You must produce the kind of fruit which shows that you have changed your minds and your way of living.

9And don't think you can say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father'. For I'm telling you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham out of these stones.

10And right now the ax is hanging in the air, ready to strike at the root of the trees, and every tree which doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11"I'm baptizing you with water, so that you will change your minds and your way of living. But the man who is following me is much more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to carry His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. **12**He has His separating fork* in His hand, which He will use to clean up His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn. But he will burn up the straw with a fire that can never be put out."

Jesus is Baptized

Fall, 26

13At that same time Jesus came to the Jordan river. He had come from Galilee to be baptized by John.

14John however tried to stop Him. "I need to be baptized by You," said John. "How can You be coming to me?"

15But Jesus answered, "You must let me be baptized. You see, we must do it this way, so that everything will be done just the way God wants." So John let Him be baptized.

16And as soon as Jesus was baptized and stepped out of the water, a wonderful thing happened. The heavens opened up, and Jesus saw God's Spirit as it came down like a dove and sat on Him. **17**And then another wonderful thing happened. There was a voice coming out of the sky saying, "This is My Son, My own dear Son. He has made Me very, very happy."

Jesus is Tested by the Devil

4 Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tested by the devil. **2** And after Jesus had gone without food for forty days and nights, He was hungry.

3 Then the one who was going to test Him came up to Him, and said, "Since You are God's Son, tell these stones to turn into little loaves of bread".*

4 But Jesus answered, "The Bible says, 'A man must not live on bread alone. He must feed on every word that comes out of God's mouth'."†

5 Then the devil took Jesus into the holy city and set Him on the highest little roof of the Temple, **6** and said to Him, "Since You are God's Son, jump down! After all, the Bible says,

'God will give His angels orders about You,
and they will lift You up and carry You
in their hands,
so that You won't stub your toe on a stone'."†

7 But Jesus replied, "In another place the Bible says, 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test'!"†

8 Next the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and all their beautiful things. **9** Then he said to Jesus, "I will give You all this if You will get down on Your knees, with your forehead on the ground, and worship me."*

10 And Jesus answered, "Get out of here, Satan! For the Bible says,

'Get down on your knees before the Lord your God,
and worship only Him'!"†

11 Then the devil let Jesus go, and right away some angels came and took care of Him.

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee

12 Later on, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested,* He left Judea and went back to Galilee.

13 But He left Nazareth and went to Capernaum and

made His home there. Capernaum is located on the shore of Lake Galilee, in the part of the land that belonged to Zebulon and Naphtali.* ¹⁴He did this so that what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah would come true -

15 "The land of Zebulon, and the land of Naphtali,
lying on the Ocean Road
on the other side of the Jordan river,
Galilee, filled with foreigners.

16 The people who were sitting in darkness
have seen a great light.
Yes, the Light has dawned for those
who were living in that area
overshadowed by death".⁺

17 And from that time on Jesus began to spread the news, telling the people, "You must change your minds and your way of living, for the Kingdom of Heaven is here!"

Jesus Calls His First Four Followers

18 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, He saw the two brothers named Simon and Andrew. Simon was also called Peter. They were fishermen, and they were throwing their net* into the water. **19** And Jesus said to them, "Come and live with me as my students* and I will make you fishers of men." **20** And right away they left their nets and followed Him.

21 Then Jesus walked a little farther and saw two other brothers named James and John. They were in their boat with their father Zebedee, fixing their nets, and Jesus also called them. **22** And right away they left their boat and their father and began to live with Jesus as their teacher.

Jesus Travels around Galilee

23 Then Jesus travelled around all over Galilee, explaining the Bible* to the people in their meeting houses, and spreading the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness among

the people. ²⁴And the news about Him spread through the whole province of Syria, so that they brought all kinds of sick people to Him, suffering from all sorts of diseases and pains. Some had demons inside of them, some had epilepsy,* and some were paralyzed. And Jesus healed them all. ²⁵And so great crowds of people followed Him, coming from Galilee and Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and the other side of the Jordan river.*

Jesus Teaches His Followers

⁵ One day when Jesus saw the crowds of people, He went up into the hills. And when He sat down, His followers gathered around Him, ²and He began to talk and explain the Bible* to them.

³ "The truly happy people," He said, "are those who are spiritually poor,
because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.

⁴ The truly happy people are 'those who are in great sorrow,
because God will cheer them up'.⁺

⁵ The truly happy people are 'those who are kind and gentle to others,
because they will receive the Land which God has set aside to give to His children'.⁺

⁶ The truly happy people are those who want most of all to be perfectly holy in God's sight,
because God will give them what they want.

⁷ The truly happy people are those who show mercy to others,
because God will show mercy to them.

⁸ 'The truly happy people are those whose hearts are clean,
because they will see God'.⁺

⁹ The truly happy people are those who make peace with others,
because they are the ones whom God will call His children.

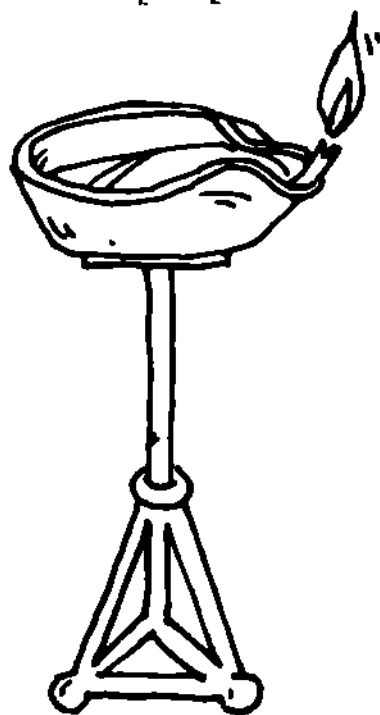
¹⁰ The truly happy people are those who are being hated and hunted down like animals for doing

what God says is right,
because the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.

11"You are the truly happy people when others insult you, and try to kill you, and lie about you and say all kinds of bad things about you because of me. **12**Be happy and joyful, because you will be fully repaid in heaven. You see, the people of Israel hated and tried to kill the prophets who lived before you in exactly the same way.

13"You people are the salt your nation needs. But if salt loses its flavor, what is there that can make it salty again? Saltless salt isn't good for anything any more. And so it's thrown outside and people walk all over it.

14"You people are the light this world needs. There's no way to hide a city that is sitting on top of a hill. **15**And people don't light a lamp and then put it under a basket. Lamps are put on lampstands,* and then they provide light for everyone in the house. **16**That's exactly the way it must be with you. Your light must always be shining where everyone can see it, so that they will see the good things you're doing, and praise and honor your Father in heaven.



AN OIL LAMP
ON ITS STAND

Something to Remember About the Bible

17"Don't ever think that I have come to destroy the Law or the writings of the prophets.* I haven't come to destroy them, but to make what they say come true.

18"You see, I'm telling you the truth when I say that until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the dot of an i, will be erased from the Law* until everything that is written there happens.

19And therefore the person who breaks even the smallest one of these commandments, or teaches others to do so, will have the lowest place in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the person who always tries to do what the Law says, and teaches others to do so also, will have a high place in the Kingdom of Heaven. **20**You see, I'm telling you that unless you are a lot more perfect than the scribes* and the Pharisees,* you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Right Understanding of the Law

21"You have heard that the Law told the people who lived long ago, 'You must not kill! Anyone who kills will be punished by the judge'.⁺ **22**But I'm telling you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be punished by the Judge, and anyone who calls his brother an idiot will be punished by the Sanhedrin,* and anyone who calls another person a fool will be sent into the fires of hell.

23"And so if you're bringing your gift to the altar, and then you remember that your brother has something against you, **24**you must leave your gift there in front of the altar and first go and make friends with your brother. Then go and offer your gift.

25"And if someone accuses you of doing something wrong, you must try to settle the argument quickly in a friendly way before you get to the courtroom. If you don't, your accuser will turn you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the policeman, and you'll be thrown in jail. **26**And I'm telling you the truth when I say that you will never get out of there until you pay the last penny of your fine.

27"You have heard that the Law said, 'You must not have sex with anyone except your own husband or wife!'⁺ **28**But I'm telling you that any man who looks at a woman in such a way that he wants to go to bed with her has already had sex with her in his heart.

29"So if it's true that your right eye is causing you

to fall into sin, gouge it out and throw it away. After all, it's better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if it's true that your right hand is causing you to fall into sin, cut it off and throw it away. After all, it's better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go to hell.

³¹"The Law also said, 'Any man who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce'.⁺ ³²But I'm telling you that any man who divorces his wife without proof that she has had sex with someone else is causing her to live with someone who isn't her husband. And any man who marries a divorced woman is living with someone else's wife.

³³"You have also heard that the Law told the people who lived long ago, 'You must never use an oath* to make a promise, and then fail to do it. And you must do what you promise the Lord to do'.⁺ ³⁴But I'm telling you that you must not swear any oaths at all, not 'by heaven', because 'heaven is God's throne', ³⁵nor 'by the earth', because 'the earth is God's footstool',⁺ nor 'by Jerusalem', because Jerusalem is 'the great King's city'.⁺ ³⁶And you mustn't swear by your own head either, because you don't have the power to make a single hair white or black. ³⁷But all you need to say is 'yes' and 'no'. Anything more than that comes from the Evil One.

³⁸"You have heard that the Law said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'.⁺ ³⁹But I'm telling you that you must never strike back at a wicked man. Instead, if someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn your face so that he can slap the other cheek also. ⁴⁰And if someone wants to take you to court and take your shirt, let him have your long outer cloak too. ⁴¹And if a Roman soldier forces you to carry his pack for a mile,* go two miles with him. ⁴²When someone asks you for something, give it to him; and don't turn your back on the one who wants to borrow something from you.

43"You have heard that the Law said, 'You must love your neighbor',⁺ and hate your enemy. **44**But I'm telling you that you must love your enemies, and pray for those who hate you and try to kill you. **45**Then you will be true children of your Father in heaven, because He makes His sun shine on the bad people as well as the good ones, and He sends rain to those who do what is right, and also to those who do wrong.

46"After all, what reward will you have if you love only those who love you? Even the tax collectors do that much, don't they? **47**And what are you doing that's extra special if you have a friendly greeting only for your friends? Even the foreigners do that much, don't they?

48"What I'm saying is that you people must be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus Talks about Jewish Religious Customs

6 "Be careful that you don't do your good deeds in front of other people because you want them to see what you're doing. If you do that, you won't have any reward from your Father in heaven.

2"So when you're giving something to the poor, don't be like the people who are just pretending to be religious. When they give to the poor in the meeting houses or in the streets, they make a big show of it, so that everyone will praise them. I'm telling you the truth when I say that they're getting their reward right now. **3**But when you are giving something to the poor, your left hand mustn't know what your right hand is doing, **4**so that your gift will be a secret. And your Father who sees all secrets, will reward you.

5"And when you're praying, you mustn't be like the people who are just pretending to be religious, because they love to stand and pray in the meeting houses and on the street corners, so that everyone will see them. I'm telling you the truth when I say that they're getting their reward right now. **6**But when you are praying, go into your room and lock the door, and pray

to your Father who is in His secret place. And your Father, who sees all secrets, will reward you.

7"And when you're praying, don't use a lot of meaningless words like the foreigners do. You see, they think God is going to hear them because they say long prayers. 8But you mustn't be like them. After all, your Father knows everything you need before you ask Him.

9"So this is the way you must pray -

'Our Father in heaven,
Your Name must be kept holy.

10 Your Kingdom must come.

What You want must be done on earth,
just as it is in heaven.

11 Give us today the food
we need for the next day;

12 and forgive us the bad things we have done,
just as we also forgive those who have done
bad things to us.

13 And don't let us be led into temptation,
but rescue us from the Evil One.'

14"You see, if you forgive other people's sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15But if you don't forgive other people, your Father won't forgive your sins either.

16"And when you're going without food,* don't look sad and gloomy, like those people do who are just pretending to be religious. You see, they walk around with their hair uncombed and their faces unwashed, so that everyone will see that they are going without food. I'm telling you the truth when I say that they're getting their reward right now. 17But when you are going without food, comb your hair with some nice smelling hair oil, and wash your face, 18so that people can't tell that you're going without food, but only your Father, who is in His secret place, will know. And your Father, who sees all secrets, will reward you.

Jesus Talks about Material Things

19"You must stop storing up treasures for yourselves here on earth, where moths and rust destroy them, and thieves break in and steal them. **20**Instead, you must be storing up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust will never destroy them, and thieves will never break in and steal them. **21**And remember that your heart will always be where your treasure is.*

22"Your eyes serve as lamps for your body. And so if you have good eyes, your whole body will be full of light. **23**But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if your inner light is turned off completely, how terribly dark it will be!

24"No person can be the slave of two masters. You see, either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and care nothing about the other. You can't have both God and earthly 'things' as your masters.

25"And this is why I'm telling you that you must stop worrying about what you're going to eat or drink to stay alive, or what kind of clothes you're going to put on your bodies. Isn't there more to life than food? And aren't there more important things for the body than clothes?

26"Look at those birds up there in the sky. And remember that they don't plant any seeds, they don't gather in any harvest, and they don't store anything away in barns. But your heavenly Father keeps on feeding them. You're worth a lot more than those birds, aren't you?

27"And which one of you can add one more hour to his lifetime by worrying? **28**So why are you worrying about clothes? Learn a lesson from the way the wild lilies in this field are growing. They don't do any work, and they don't spin any thread. **29**But I'm telling you that even Solomon, with all his riches and beautiful clothes, was never dressed up like one of those little

flowers. **30** This is the way God provides clothing for the grass and flowers which grow wild in the fields, things which are alive today and are burned in the oven tomorrow. Don't you think He's going to be much more concerned about providing you with clothes? Your faith is too small.

31 "What I'm saying is that you mustn't worry! Don't be saying, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?'

32 You see, these are the kind of things which the people of the other nations* are always chasing after. But your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** And so your number one goal in life must be to be a member of God's Kingdom and to be perfectly holy, in God's sight, just as He is. And then He will give you all these other things.

34 "So never worry about tomorrow. After all, tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day's troubles are more than enough for that day.

Getting Along with Others

7 "You must stop talking about the wrong things other people are doing, so that others won't be talking about the wrong things you're doing. **2** You see, the judgment you make when you're talking about other people's sins is the same judgment others will make when they talk about your sins. And the measure you use in measuring out to other people is the same measure others will use in measuring out to you.

3 "And why do you keep looking at the little speck of dust in your brother's eye, but pay no attention to the big piece of wood which is in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take that speck of dust out of your eye', when there in your own eye is a great big piece of wood? **5** When you do that, you're just pretending to be able to help your brother. First take the big piece of wood out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the little speck of dust out of your brother's eye.

6 "Never give the dogs anything that could be used

to serve God.

If you do, they will turn on you and tear you to pieces.

And never throw your pearls down in front of the pigs.

If you do, they will trample them into the mud with their feet.

7"Keep on asking, and you'll get what you ask for; keep on searching, and you'll find what you're looking for; keep on knocking, and the door will be opened for you. **8**For everyone who keeps on asking gets what he asks for; and everyone who keeps on searching finds what he's looking for; and the door will be opened for everyone who keeps on knocking.

9"Suppose one of you had a son who asked you for a little loaf of bread.* You wouldn't give him a stone, would you? **10**And if he also asked you for a fish, you wouldn't give him a rattlesnake, would you? **11**And so since you wicked people know how to give good things to your children, how much more willingly will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

12"And this means that you must do all the things for others that you want them to do for you, for this is what God is saying in the Law and the Prophets.*

How to Get into the Kingdom of Heaven

13"You must go in through the narrow gate. You see, there's a big wide gate and a fine broad highway that leads to eternal destruction; and there are lots of people who are going through that gate. **14**But there's a little narrow gate and a narrow one lane path that leads to Life;* and there are only a few people who find it.*

15"You must be on your guard against the false prophets who come to you dressed up like sheep, but are really dangerous wolves.

16"You will recognize them by the fruit they produce. People don't pick grapes from thorn bushes, do they?

Nor figs from thistles? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a rotten tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good healthy tree can't produce bad fruit, and a rotten tree can't produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰And so I'll say it again. You will recognize them by the fruit they produce.

²¹"Not every person who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' is going to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. No, the one who gets in will be the person who does what my Father in heaven wants. ²²On Judgment Day many people will be saying to me, 'Lord, Lord! Didn't we live as Your followers, and speak as Your prophets? And as Your followers, didn't we drive out demons and work many miracles?' ²³And then I will have to tell them, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you wicked people!'

²⁴"You see, every person who hears these words of mine and does what I tell him to do, is like a wise man who built his house on the solid rock. ²⁵Then the rain poured down, and the rivers flooded over, and the winds began to blow, and they all smashed against that house; but it didn't fall apart, because it was standing on the solid rock.

²⁶"And every person who hears these words of mine and doesn't do what I tell him is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷Then the rain poured down, and the rivers flooded over, and the winds began to blow, and they all pounded against that house; and it fell apart with a great crash."

²⁸And when Jesus finished speaking, the crowds were completely amazed at the way He explained the Bible.* ²⁹You see, He explained it like a man who knows what he's talking about, not like the scribes.*

8 And when He came down from the mountain, great crowds of people followed Him.

Jesus Heals a Leper

²One day a wonderful thing happened. A leper came up to Jesus and fell on his knees in front of Jesus, with his forehead on the ground.* "Lord," he said, "if You want to, You can make me clean".*

³Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man.* And as He did so, He said, "I do want to. Be clean!" And right away the man's leprosy was gone.

⁴Then Jesus said to him, "See to it that you don't talk to anyone. But go and let the priest examine you.* And bring the gift Moses ordered to show people that you have been healed".⁺

Jesus Heals a Roman Captain's Slave

⁵When Jesus got back to Capernaum, a Roman army captain came to Him, asking for His help. ⁶"Sir," he said, "one of my servants is sick in bed at home. He's paralyzed, and in terrible pain."

⁷"I'll come and heal him," said Jesus.

⁸But the captain replied, "Sir, I'm not good enough to have You come into my house. You just say the word, and my servant will get well. ⁹You see, I'm a man who works under higher officers, and I have soldiers under me. And I say to this fellow, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another man, 'Come!' and he comes; and I tell my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

¹⁰Jesus was astonished when He heard the man. And He said to the people who were following Him, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that I have never found a faith like this in Israel. ¹¹And I'm also telling you that many people will come 'from the east and the west',⁺ and they will take their places at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. ¹²But those who were born as members of the Kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness, where the people will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain."

¹³Then Jesus said to the captain, "Go on home.

Since you believe I can do this, I must do what you ask." And the man's servant was healed at that very moment.

Jesus Heals a Lot of People in Capernaum

14One day when Jesus went to Peter's house, He saw that Peter's wife's mother was sick in bed with a fever. **15**So He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and started to get dinner for Him.

16Later on, towards the end of the afternoon, they brought a lot of people to Jesus who had demons inside of them. And He drove out the evil spirits by telling them to go, and healed all those who were sick. **17**By doing this He made what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah come true -

"He Himself has taken our sicknesses,
and carried away our diseases".⁺

About Becoming One of Jesus' Followers

18And one day when Jesus saw a crowd of people gathered around Him, He ordered the twelve to take Him across to the other side of the lake. **19**But just then one of the scribes* came up to Him and said, "Rabbi,* I want to live with You as one of Your students wherever You go".*

20But Jesus answered, "Foxes live in holes in the ground, and the birds have nests; but the Son of Man* has no place to lie down and rest."

21Then another one of Jesus' followers said to Him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

22But Jesus said to him, "You must come and live with me as one of my students, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Jesus Calms a Storm

23Then Jesus and His followers all climbed into the boat; **24**and later an amazing thing happened. Suddenly a terrible storm hit the lake, and the waves

were washing over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping.

25 So His followers ran to Him and woke Him up. "Lord," they shouted. "Save us! We're drowning!"

26 "Why are you so afraid?" said Jesus. "Your faith is so small." Then He got up and told the winds and the lake to quiet down. And everything became perfectly quiet and still.

27 The men were astonished. "What kind of a man is this?" they asked. "Even the winds and the waves do what He says."

Jesus Heals Two Demon-possessed Men

28 When Jesus landed in the district of Gergesa,* on the other side of the lake, two men who had demons inside of them came to meet Him. They had come out of the caves where they buried the dead, and they were so wild and dangerous that no one was able to travel along the road that ran nearby. **29** Then a strange thing happened. These men began to yell, "Son of God, why are You coming to see us? Have You come here to torture us ahead of time?"

31a Then the demons began to beg Jesus, **30** "Look at that big herd of pigs feeding way over there! **31b** Since You're going to drive us out, send us into that herd of pigs."

32 And when Jesus told them to go, they left the men and went into the pigs. And then a strange thing happened. The whole herd ran wildly over the edge of the cliff and down into the lake and drowned.

33 The men who were taking care of the pigs got out of there as fast as they could. They went back to the city and told the whole story, including the things that had happened to the men with the demons.

34 And right away the whole city went out to meet Jesus.* And when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their country. **9** So Jesus got into the boat and sailed across the lake and went back to His own city.

Jesus Heals a Man Who was Paralyzed

²One day a wonderful thing happened. Some men came to Jesus carrying a paralyzed man who was lying on a little mat.* When Jesus saw how much faith they had, He said to the man who was paralyzed, "Cheer up, young man! Your sins are forgiven."

³But there were some scribes* in the crowd, and they said to themselves, "This fellow is insulting God."

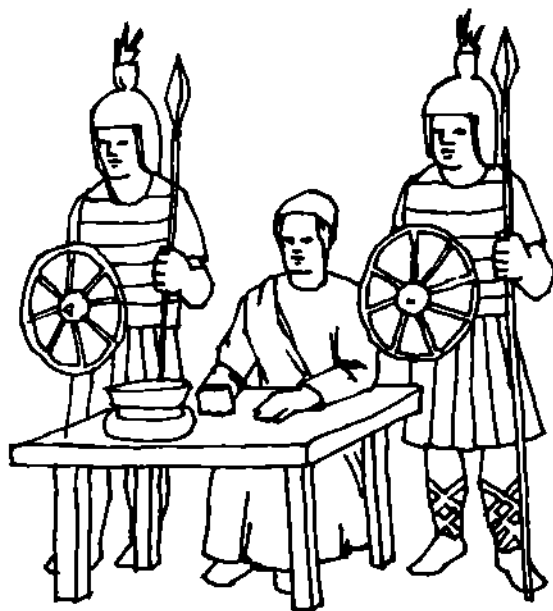
⁴Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so He asked them, "Why do you have such wicked thoughts in your hearts?" ⁵After all, is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ⁶But now I'll prove to you that the Son of Man* has the authority to forgive sins here on earth." Then He said to the paralyzed man, "Get up! Pick up your little mat and go on home!" ⁷And the man got up and went home.

⁸When the crowd saw this, they were frightened, but they also began to praise God who had given such authority as this to men.

Jesus Calls Matthew to be His Follower

⁹Jesus then left the house. And as He was walking along the street, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's table.* "Come and live with me as one of my students!" said Jesus. And Matthew jumped to his feet and followed Him.

¹⁰And later, while Jesus was having dinner* at Matthew's house, there were a lot of tax collectors who had come to the dinner, and some other people who had lived sinful lives. Some of them were eating



THE TAX COLLECTOR
AT HIS TABLE

at the same table with Jesus and His followers. ¹¹So when the Pharisees* saw this, they said to Jesus' followers, "Why is your teacher eating with tax collectors and people whose lives are so sinful?"

¹²When Jesus heard that, He said, "The ones who need a doctor are the sick people, not those who are well and strong. ¹³But you must go and learn what this verse means - 'I want mercy and kindness, not sacrifice'.⁺ You see, I haven't come to call people who are perfectly holy to be my followers. I have come to call sinners."

Jesus Talks about Going without Food

¹⁴After this some of John's followers came to Jesus and asked Him, "Why is it that we and the Pharisees often go without food,* but Your followers don't do this?"

¹⁵Jesus answered, "The wedding guests can't be sad, can they, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will have to leave them; and then they will go without food.

¹⁶"No one makes a patch out of a piece of cloth that hasn't been shrunk and puts it on an old cloak, for when it shrinks, the strong cloth of the patch tears away some of the cloth from the cloak, and the hole becomes even bigger.

¹⁷"And people don't put new wine into old wineskins.* If they do, the skins break open, and the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Instead, people put new wine into new wineskins, and then both are kept in good condition."

A Bleeding Woman and a Dead Girl

¹⁸While Jesus was still talking with John's followers, an amazing thing happened. The president of a meeting house came up to Jesus and fell on his knees in front of Him, with his forehead on the ground.* "My daughter has just died," he said. "But if You will come and put Your hand on her, she will come back to life."

19 So Jesus got up and went with the man, and Jesus' followers also went along.

20 Then a wonderful thing happened. There was a woman who had been bleeding inside for twelve years. And she came up to Jesus from behind and touched one of the little tassels on His long outer cloak.* **21** You see, she was thinking to herself, "If I just touch His cloak, I'll get well."

22 But then Jesus turned around, and when He saw her, He said, "Cheer up, young lady, your faith has made you well." And she was perfectly well from that moment on.

23 And when Jesus went into the president's house, He saw the flute players who were playing for the funeral, and the crowd of people making a lot of noise. **24** So He said to them, "Get out of here! The little girl hasn't died. She's sleeping."*

Then they all began to laugh at Him. **25** But as soon as the crowd left the house, Jesus went into the little girl's room, and took hold of her hand, and she got up. **26** And the news of what He had done spread all over that part of the land.

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

27 As Jesus was leaving the house, two blind men followed Him, yelling at Him, "Son of David! Have pity on us!"

28 And when Jesus went into His house, the blind men followed Him in and came up to Him. So Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I have the power to do this?"

"Yes Sir," they answered.

29 Then Jesus touched their eyes, and as He did so, He said, "Since you believe that I can do this, I must do what you want." **30** And their eyes were opened.

Then Jesus' voice became stern and angry as He said to them, "See to it that no one finds out about this!" **31** But they went out all over that part of the

land and spread the news about what He had done.

Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon

32Then as the two men were leaving the house, some people brought another man to Jesus. This man couldn't talk because he had a demon inside of him.

33But as soon as Jesus drove the demon out, the man began to speak.

The crowds were astonished. "No one has ever seen anything like this in Israel," they said.

34But the Pharisees* said, "It's the ruler of the demons who is giving him the power to drive out these demons."

Jesus again Travels around Galilee

35After this Jesus travelled around to all the cities and villages of Galilee, explaining the Bible* to the people in their meeting houses,* and spreading the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. **36**But when He saw the crowds of people, He felt sorry for them, because they were like a flock of sheep who have been attacked by wolves and are lying wounded on the ground, because they have no shepherd.

37So He said to His followers, "There's a lot of grain to be gathered in, but only a few workers. **38**Therefore you must ask the one who is in charge of the harvest to send out more workers to gather in the grain."

Jesus Sends Out His Twelve Apostles

10 Then Jesus called His twelve followers together and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and cure every kind of disease and sickness. **2**And these are the names of those twelve apostles.* First there was Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, **3**Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector, James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, **4**Simon "the Patriot", and Judas from Kerioth, who later handed Jesus over to His enemies.

5Then Jesus gave these 12 men their orders and sent them out. "Don't go into any foreign country," He told them, "nor into any of the cities in Samaria. **6**Instead, you must go to my lost sheep, the nation of Israel. **7**And as you go, keep on spreading the news that the Kingdom of Heaven is here. **8**Keep on healing those who are sick, raising the dead back to life, making the lepers clean, and driving out demons. You haven't paid anything for what you have received, and you must give without asking for any payment.

9"Don't put any gold, silver or copper coins in your belts. **10**Don't take any travelling bag for your trip, no extra shirt, or sandals, and no walking stick. After all, the worker must be given his food.

11"And whenever you come to a city or village, look around for the right kind of a man, and stay at that man's house until you leave. **12**And when you go into his house, give everyone there a friendly greeting. **13**If the people there are the right kind of people, give them your greeting of peace, but if they aren't the right kind of people, you must not give them your greeting of peace.*

14And when you find someone who doesn't give you a friendly welcome or listen to what you have to say, leave that house or that city. And as you leave, shake the dust of that place off your feet.* **15**I'm telling you the truth when I say that on Judgment Day it will be a lot better for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than for the people of that city.



SHAKING THE DUST
OFF ONE'S FEET

Jesus' Followers will be Hated

16"Remember that I'm sending you out like sheep who will be surrounded by wolves. Therefore you must

be as wise as snakes, and as harmless as doves. **17** Be on your guard against other people. For they will have you arrested and brought to trial before their councils, and you will be whipped in their local courts. **18** You will be brought to trial before governors and kings because of me; and this will give you a chance to tell them and the people of the other nations* what you know about me.

19 "But when they arrest you, don't worry about what you're going to say, or how you're going to say it. When the time comes, you will be told what to say. **20** You see, it isn't you who will be speaking, but your Father's Spirit who will be using your tongue.

21 "People will hand over their own brothers to be put to death. Fathers will hand over their children, and children will rise up against their parents and kill them. **22** And you will be hated by everyone because of me; but the one who patiently holds on to his faith to the end will be saved.

23 "When they try to kill you in one city, leave them and go to another one. You see, I'm telling you the truth when I say that you will never finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man* comes.

24 "No student is greater than his teacher, and no slave is greater than his master. **25** A student will be satisfied if he gets to be like his teacher, and a slave will be satisfied if he gets to be like his master. And since they have called the master of the house 'Beelzebul'* they will say and do even worse things to his slaves.

26 "But you mustn't be afraid of such people. You see, there's nothing covered up which won't be uncovered, and nothing hidden which won't be made known. **27** What I'm telling you in the dark you must tell others in broad daylight, and the things you're hearing in private you must shout from the housetops.

28 "And you must stop being afraid of those who kill the body, but aren't able to kill the soul. Instead, you must be afraid of the One who has the power to

destroy both the soul and the body in hell.

29"Isn't it true that two sparrows are sold for one assar? Yet not one of them will ever fall to the ground without your Father knowing about it. **30**But even the hairs on your head are all numbered. **31**So you mustn't be afraid. You are worth a lot more than many sparrows.

Confessing Christ

32"If a person tells other people that I'm his Lord, I'll tell my Father in heaven, 'That person is my follower'. **33**But if a person tells other people that he doesn't want anything to do with me, I'll tell my Father in heaven, 'I don't want anything to do with him'.

Jesus is a Cause of Division

34"Don't think that I came to bring peace to the world. I didn't come to bring peace, but a sword.

35The truth is that I came to divide, and set

'a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a man's wife against his mother.

36Yes, a man's enemies will be the members of his own household'.⁺

37"The person who loves his father or mother more than me isn't fit to be my follower. The person who loves his son or daughter more than me isn't fit to be my follower. **38**The person who doesn't take up his cross and stay right with me all the time isn't fit to be my follower. **39**The person who finds his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will find it.

40"The person who receives you as his friend is receiving me; and the person who receives me is receiving the One who sent me. **41**Anyone who gives a prophet a friendly welcome because he's a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And anyone who becomes a friend of someone who does what is right because he's a good person will receive a good person's reward. **42**And

I'm telling you the truth when I say that if someone gives one of these little ones of mine a cup of cold water to drink, and does so because he's my follower, that person will never lose his reward."

11 And when Jesus finished giving these instructions to His twelve apostles, He left that place, so that He could explain the Bible* and spread the news to the people in the surrounding cities and towns.

John the Baptist Sends His Men to Jesus

2At that time John was in prison. And when he heard about the things Jesus was doing, he sent some of his followers **3**to ask Jesus this question - "Are You really the One who is coming, or should we be looking for some other kind of a Messiah?"*

4And Jesus answered, "Go back and tell John about the things you're hearing and seeing. **5**Tell him that

'blind people are seeing again,

and cripples are walking around.

Lepers are being cleansed,

and deaf people are hearing again'.⁺

Dead people are being raised back to life,

and the 'poor people are hearing the Good News'.⁺

6Then tell him that the person who doesn't stumble and lose his faith in me is a truly happy person."

7And as John's followers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. "What did you go out into the desert to see?" He asked. "A thin little reed being bent this way and that way by the wind?

8Of course not. But what did you go out to see? A man all dressed up in the finest clothes? You know very well that the people who are dressed in the finest clothes live in kings' palaces. **9**But why did you go out there? Was it to see a prophet? Yes indeed, and I'm telling you that you saw something more than a prophet. **10**This is the man the Bible is talking about where it says,

'Now hear this!

I'm sending out my messenger ahead of You.

He will get Your highway ready for You'.⁺

11"I'm telling you the truth when I say that there is no human being who has ever been born who is greater than John the Baptist. And yet the least important person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John.

12"From the time of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven is being attacked, and people who are determined to get in are trying to force their way into it. **13**You see, until John came, it was the Law and all the prophets who brought God's message to the people of Israel. **14**And if you're willing to believe me, John is 'Elijah', who was going to come. **15**Now think about what you have just heard!

16"But what are the Israelites who are living today like? They're like little children sitting in the town squares* and calling out to the others,

17 'We played wedding music for you,
but you didn't dance.

We sang funeral songs,

but you didn't moan and pound your chests.'*

18You see, when John came, he didn't eat anything or drink anything, and the people are saying, 'He has a demon inside of him.' **19**The Son of Man* came eating and drinking, and they're saying, 'Look! There's a man who eats too much and drinks too much. He's a friend of tax collectors* and sinful people.' But God's wisdom is shown to be the right kind of wisdom by the things it leads a person to do and say."

Jesus Condemns the Cities of Galilee

20Then Jesus began to scold the people in those cities where most of His miracles had been done, because they hadn't changed their minds or their way of living..

21"Chorazin,* how terrible it's going to be for you,, and Bethsaida,* how terrible it's going to be for you.. For if the miracles which have been done in you had been done in Tyre* and Sidon,* the people there would long ago have put on their mourning clothes and covered their heads with ashes,* to show that they had changed

their minds and their way of living. **22**Yes, I'm telling you that it will be a lot better for Tyre and Sidon on Judgment Day than for you. **23**And you, Capernaum,*

You don't really think that 'you will be lifted up to heaven, do you?'

No indeed, 'you will be brought down to hell'.⁺

For if the miracles which have been done in you had been done in Sodom, it would still be here today. **24**Yes, I'm telling you that it will be a lot better for the people of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you."

Jesus' Invitation - Come and Find Rest

25And at that same time Jesus said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I'm praising You because You have hidden things like this from those who are wise and educated, and have explained them to the little children. **26**Yes Father, it made You happy to do things this way.

27"My Father has handed everything over to me. But no one really knows the Son except the Father, and no one really knows the Father except the Son, and that person with whom the Son wants to share His knowledge.

28"All those who are tired from carrying their heavy loads must come to me, and I will make you feel fresh and strong again. **29**Put my yoke on your necks and be my students, and your souls will find rest and strength, because I am kind and gentle, and willing to help the lowest person. **30**You see, my yoke is an easy one to wear, and the load I ask you to carry is a light one."

The Question of Working on Saturday

12At that same time Jesus took a walk through a field of grain on a Saturday. And since His followers were hungry, they began to pick off the heads of grain and eat them. **2**But when the Pharisees* saw this, they said to Jesus, "Look! Your followers are doing something which is against the Law on Saturday".*

³Jesus answered, "Haven't you read about what David did when he and his men were hungry? ⁴How he went into God's house, and then they ate the bread which was set out for God?*" It was against the Law for both David and his men to eat that bread. Only the priests are allowed to eat it. ⁵And you have certainly read in the Bible haven't you, that on Saturday the priests at the Temple break the Saturday law, and yet are not guilty of any sin?*

⁶"And now I'm telling you that there's something here that is greater than the Temple. ⁷And if you really knew what God means when He says, 'I want mercy, not sacrifice',⁺ you wouldn't have condemned innocent people. ⁸You see, the Son of Man* has full authority over our day of rest."

Jesus Heals a Man on Saturday

⁹After Jesus left that field, He went to their meeting house.* ¹⁰And at once He saw a man with a hand that was all dried up and dead. There were also some men there who wanted to accuse Jesus of breaking the Law. So they said to Him, "Does the Law allow us to heal someone on Saturday?"

¹¹Jesus replied, "Suppose one of you has just one sheep, and that sheep falls into a deep hole on Saturday. You would certainly grab hold of it and lift it out, wouldn't you? ¹²And isn't a man worth much more than a sheep? So the answer is that the Law allows us to do good things on Saturday."

¹³Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" And when the man did so, his hand became perfectly well, just like the other one. ¹⁴And then the Pharisees* left the meeting house and began to talk about finding a way to kill Jesus.*

Jesus Heals a Lot of People as God's Servant

¹⁵Jesus however knew what they were doing, and so He left that city, and a lot of people followed Him. And when He had healed all the sick people, ¹⁶He

gave them strict orders that they mustn't tell anyone who He was. ¹⁷He did all this so that what God said through the prophet Isaiah would come true -

¹⁸ "Look! Here is My Servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, who makes My heart very happy.

I will give Him My Spirit,
and He will rule over the other nations.*

¹⁹ He will not quarrel or shout,
and no one will hear His voice in the streets.

²⁰ He will never break off a little reed that is crushed,
and He will never put out a smoking wick,
until He pronounces the judgment that brings the
victory.

²¹ And the people of the other nations will pin
their hopes on Him".⁺

Jesus is Accused of Working for the Devil

²²One day some people brought a man to Jesus who was blind and couldn't speak, because he had a demon inside of him. And Jesus healed him, so that he could talk and see.

²³The crowds of people were all amazed, and they were saying, "This fellow couldn't be the Son of David, could he?"

²⁴But when the Pharisees* heard this, they said, "This fellow isn't driving out any demons, unless it's by the power of Beelzebul,* the ruler of the demons."

²⁵Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking. So He said to them, "Every kingdom which is divided into opposing groups is destroyed; and every city or family which is divided into opposing groups will never last. ²⁶So if it's true that Satan is driving out Satan, his kingdom is divided and he's fighting against himself. So how can his kingdom last?

²⁷"But if it's true that I'm driving out demons by Beelzebul's power, what about your followers? By whose power are they driving them out? Therefore even they will say that you're wrong. ²⁸But if it's true that I'm driving out demons by God's Spirit, then

God's Kingdom has come to your city.

29"How can anyone get into a strong man's house and carry off his belongings, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can carry off everything in the house.

30"The person who isn't with me is against me, and the one who doesn't help me gather is really scattering.

31"This is why I'm telling you that people will be forgiven every sin and every nasty and insulting thing they say. But any insulting thing spoken about the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. **32**Yes, the person who says something bad about the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who says something bad about the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come.

A Tree and Its Fruit

33"You either have a good tree, and the good fruit it produces, or you have a rotten tree, and the rotten fruit it produces. For it's the fruit which tells you what kind of a tree you have.

34"You're a nest of rattlesnakes! How can wicked people like you ever say anything good? After all, your mouth puts into words the thoughts that fill your heart. **35**So a good person brings up good things out of his good storeroom, and a wicked person brings up wicked things out of his wicked storeroom.

36"And I'm telling you that on Judgment Day people will have to answer for every unnecessary word they have ever spoken. **37**You see, God will accept you as perfectly holy in His sight* because of the things you say, and He will condemn you because of the things you say."

Jesus Scolds the Israelites of His Day

38Then some of the scribes* and Pharisees spoke up. "Rabbi",* they said, "we want to see some special miracle to show that God has sent you."

39And Jesus replied, "It's a wicked and godless group of people who are looking for a special miracle, and

the only miracle that will be given to them is the miracle of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰The Son of Man will be buried in the earth for three days and three nights, just as 'Jonah was in the belly of the big fish for three days and three nights'.⁺

⁴¹"On Judgment Day the people of Nineveh will rise back to life to be judged with the Israelites who are living today. But they will condemn you, because they changed their minds and their way of living when they heard Jonah's message. But I'm telling you that there is someone much greater than Jonah here today.

⁴²"On Judgment Day the queen of the south* will be raised back to life to be judged with the Israelites who are living today. But she will condemn you, because she travelled for a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom. But I'm telling you that there is someone much greater than Solomon here now.

Jesus' Story about the Unclean Spirit

⁴³"When an evil spirit leaves a person, he wanders around through the waterless desert, looking for a place to rest. But if he doesn't find one, ⁴⁴he says to himself, 'I'll go back to my house which I left.' And when he gets there, he finds it empty, and all cleaned up and put in perfect order. ⁴⁵Then he goes and gets seven other spirits who are more wicked than himself to go with him, and they all go in and live there. So in the end that person is much worse off than he was at first. This is exactly what's going to happen to the wicked Israelites who are living today."

Jesus Talks about His Family

⁴⁶While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and His brothers were standing outside, and they wanted to talk to Him. ⁴⁷And so someone said to Jesus, "Look! Your mother and brothers are standing out there. They want to talk to You."

⁴⁸But Jesus answered the man, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Then He pointed to

His followers and said, "Look! Here is my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰You see, whoever does what my heavenly Father wants is my brother and sister and mother."

Jesus' Story about the Farmer

¹³That same day Jesus left His house and went down to the lake and sat down on the beach. ²And because such large crowds of people gathered around Him, He got into a boat and sat there, while the crowd stood on the beach. ³Then He talked to them about a lot of things, telling them stories.

"Listen carefully," He said. "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴And as he was throwing it around, some of the seeds fell along the edge of the road, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Some other seeds fell on those places where there was only a thin layer of soil over the rock, and they sprouted up right away, because the layer of soil was so thin. ⁶But when the sun came up, it was too hot for the young plants, and they dried up because they had no roots. ⁷Some other seeds fell where there were thorn bushes, and the thorns came up and choked the plants. ⁸And some other seeds fell on the good soil and brought forth a crop. Some plants had a hundred kernels, others had sixty, and others had thirty kernels. ⁹Now think about what you have just heard!"

Jesus Explains Why He Used Stories

¹⁰Later Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "Why do you use stories when You talk to the people?"

¹¹And Jesus replied, "I have told you men the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but I haven't told these things to the other people. ¹²You see, 'if a person has something, he will get more, and will have more than he needs. But if one has nothing, he will even lose what he has'.*

¹³"This is why I use stories when I talk to them, because even though they look, they don't see; and even though they listen, they don't hear or understand.

14 And so they're making Isaiah's prophecy come true, which says,

"You will strain your ears to listen, but you will never understand anything;
and you will strain your eyes to look, but you will never see anything."

15 You see, these people's minds have become so lazy that they can't think at all.
and they can hardly hear with their ears,
and they have shut their eyes,
because they don't want to see anything with their eyes,
or hear anything with their ears,
or understand anything with their minds,
and turn to me,
so that I will heal them'.⁺

16 But you are truly happy people, because you have eyes that see and ears that hear. **17** For I'm telling you the truth when I say that many prophets and many of God's people have wanted very much to see the things you are seeing, but they never saw them. And they have wanted very much to hear the things you are hearing, but they never heard them.

Jesus Explains the Story of the Farmer

18 So now you must listen, and I'll tell you about the story of the farmer. **19** When someone hears the message about the Kingdom and doesn't understand it, the Evil One comes along immediately and snatches away the Word that fell in his heart. This is pictured by the seed that fell along the edge of the road. **20** And the seed which fell on the ground where there was only a thin layer of soil over the rock is a picture of the person who hears the Word and immediately receives it with great joy. **21** But it doesn't take any root in his heart and it doesn't last very long. Some trouble or suffering comes along because of the Word, and right away he loses his faith. **22** And the seed which fell in the thorn bushes is a picture of the person who hears the Word, but then the worries of life and the

false ideas that money brings choke the Word, so that it doesn't bear any fruit. ²³And the seed which fell on the good soil is a picture of the person who hears the Word and understands it. And this is the person who bears fruit. One person produces a hundred for one, another sixty for one, and another thirty for one".*

The Story of the Wild Wheat in the Field

²⁴This is another story Jesus told His followers. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his wheat field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed wild wheat all over the field and went away.

²⁶"After a while, when the seeds sprouted and the grain formed in the heads, they could see that some of the plants were wild wheat.* ²⁷So the man's slaves came to him and said, 'Master, you planted good seed in your field, didn't you? Where then did this wild wheat come from?'

²⁸"And the owner answered, 'Some enemy did this.'

"Then the slaves asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull out the wild wheat?'

²⁹" 'No,' said the master. 'I'm afraid that while you're pulling out the wild wheat, you'll pull up the wheat at the same time. ³⁰Let them both grow together until the time comes to cut the grain. Then I'll tell the harvesting crew, "First pull out the wild wheat and tie it into bundles to be burned. Then gather in the wheat and put it in my barn".' "

Two More Little Stories

³¹This is another story Jesus told them. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man takes and plants in his field. ³²Mustard is one of the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it's bigger than any of the plants in the garden. In fact, it becomes a tree, so that the birds come and build their nests in its branches."

³³This is another story which He told them. "The

Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast which a woman takes and mixes into three big lumps of dough, and soon the whole batch is full of yeast."

34When Jesus talked to the crowds about these things, He used stories. In fact, He didn't talk to them at all without using some story, **35**so that what the Lord said through the prophet would come true -

"I will open My mouth and tell stories;

I will make things known that have been hidden
ever since the world was created".⁺

Jesus Explains the Story of the Wild Wheat

36Jesus then sent the crowds away and went home. And there His followers came to Him and said, "Tell us what the story of the wild wheat in the field means."

37And Jesus answered, "The one who is sowing the good seed is the Son of Man.* **38**The field is the world. The good seed is a picture of the citizens of His Kingdom. The wild wheat is a picture of the citizens of the Evil One's kingdom. **39**The enemy who planted the wild wheat is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the harvesting crew are the angels.

40"You know how the wild wheat is gathered and burned up. That's exactly what will happen at the end of the world. **41**The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather up and take out of His Kingdom everything that causes people to fall into sin and lose their faith, and all people who do sinful things. **42**And they will throw them all into the blazing furnace, where the people will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain. **43**And then the people whom God has accepted as perfectly holy in His sight* will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Now think about what you have just heard!"

Three More Little Stories about the Kingdom

44"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure chest which is buried in a field. If anyone finds it, he buries it again. And he is so happy that he goes and sells

everything he has and buys that field.

45"Or we could say that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant who was looking for fine pearls.

46One day he found a pearl that was worth more than any pearl he had ever seen. And so he went and sold everything he had and bought it.

47"Or we could say that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a big dragnet which was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. **48**When it was full, the

men pulled it up on the beach and sat down and sorted out the fish. They threw the good ones into their baskets, and the bad ones they threw away. **49**That's

exactly what will happen at the end of the world. The angels will go and gather out the wicked from those whom God has accepted as perfectly holy in His sight.

50Then they will throw the wicked ones into the blazing furnace, where the people will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain. **51**Do you understand all this?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they answered.

52Then Jesus said, "Because I have told you these stories, every scribe* who has become one of my followers in the Kingdom of Heaven is like the owner of a house who can take both new things and old things out of his storeroom".*

The People of Nazareth Reject Jesus

53When Jesus finished telling these stories, He left the city, **54**and went to His old home town, where He began to explain the Bible* to the people in their meeting house.* But the people there were so amazed that they didn't know what to think. Some of them said, "Where did this fellow ever get such wisdom?"

And others said, "And how can he do miracles?" **55**And many of them were saying, "Isn't this fellow the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? And James, Joseph, Simon and Judas are his brothers, aren't they?"

56Aren't all of his sisters living here with us? Where did this fellow get all this?" **57**But they couldn't

believe that He was the Messiah.*

And so Jesus said to them, "The only place a prophet is not honored and respected is in his own home town and among his own family." ⁵⁸And He didn't work a lot of miracles there because of their unbelief.

How John the Baptist was Killed

¹⁴At that same time Governor Herod* heard the news about Jesus. ²So he said to his servants, "This fellow is John the Baptist. He has come back to life from the dead, and this is why he has the power to do these miracles."

³You see, Herod had arrested John, and had tied him up and put him in jail. He did this because of Herodias, who was his brother Philip's wife, ⁴and because John had kept on telling Herod, "It's against the law for you to be living with her." ⁵Herod really wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people, because they all believed that John was a prophet.

⁶But at Herod's birthday party Herodias' daughter danced for the guests. And Herod was so pleased ⁷that he promised the girl that he would give her anything she asked for, and sealed it with an oath.*

⁸So the girl told Herod, "I want John the Baptist's head on a serving plate. Bring it to me right here." It was the girl's mother who had told her to do this.

⁹Now Herod was sorry that he had made such a promise, and sealed it with an oath in front of all the guests. But he gave the order that she should get what she wanted, ¹⁰and sent a man to the jail to cut off John's head. ¹¹And the man brought in the head on a serving plate and gave it to the girl, who brought it to her mother. ¹²Then some of John's followers came and carried his body away and buried it, and after that they went and told Jesus what had happened.

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Men

¹³When Jesus heard about John's death, He left town in a boat and went to a deserted place where

He and His followers could be alone.* But when the crowds heard about it, they followed Him on foot. They came from all the towns around there. ¹⁴So when Jesus got out of the boat and saw that big crowd of people, He felt sorry for them and healed those who were sick.

¹⁵Towards the end of the afternoon Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "We're out here in a place where there are no people living, and it's already time to eat. Tell the crowds to leave, so that they can go into the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶But Jesus answered, "They don't have to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷And they replied, "We don't have anything here except five little loaves of bread* and two fish."

¹⁸"Bring them here to me!" said Jesus.



A LOAF OF BREAD

¹⁹Then He ordered the crowds to stretch out on the grass, and took the five little loaves of bread and the two fish, and looked up to heaven and asked God to bless them. After that He broke the loaves of bread into pieces and gave them to His followers; and they gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And they all ate until they were full.

Afterwards they picked up twelve big baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹And there were about five thousand men who ate, not counting the women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water and Calms a Storm

²²As soon as they had picked up the leftover food, Jesus made His followers get into the boat and start out ahead of Him back across the lake, while He sent the crowds away. ²³But after He had said good-bye to the people, He climbed up the mountain to a place where He could be alone and pray. And so by late

afternoon Jesus was there all by Himself.

24By this time the boat was out in the lake, a long ways from the shore, and it was being battered and tossed around by the waves, because the wind was blowing hard against it.

25And it wasn't until sometime between three and six o'clock in the morning that Jesus went to them, walking on top of the water. **26**And when His followers saw Him walking on top of the water, they were terribly frightened. "It's a ghost," they said, and they screamed with fear.

27But right away Jesus started to talk to them. "Be brave!" He said. "It's really me. You mustn't be afraid."

28Peter then said to Jesus, "Lord, since it's really You, give me an order to come to You, walking on top of the water."

29So Jesus called out, "Come on!"

And Peter climbed down out of the boat and started to go to Jesus, walking on top of the water. **30**But when he saw how hard the wind was blowing, he became frightened, and he began to sink down into the water. "Lord!" he screamed. "Save me!"

31So Jesus reached out His hand right away and grabbed hold of Peter. And as He did so, He said to him, "Your faith is so small. What were you afraid of?"

32Then they climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. **33**And the men in the boat fell on their knees in front of Jesus with their foreheads on the deck* and said, "You really are God's Son!"

Jesus Heals More Sick People at Gennesaret

34When they got to the other side of the lake, they landed at Gennesaret.* **35**And as soon as the people there recognized Jesus, they sent word all over the surrounding area, and the people brought all their sick friends and relatives to Jesus. **36**Those who were

sick begged Jesus to let them just touch one of the little tassels on His long outer cloak;* and all those who did so were made completely well.

Jesus Talks about the Pharisees' Rules

15 One day some Pharisees* and scribes* came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked Him, **2**"Why are your followers disobeying the laws handed down by our ancestors?* They aren't washing their hands before they eat."

3Jesus answered, "What about you? Why do you disobey God's commandment because of these laws that were handed down to you? **4**For example, God said, 'You must honor your father and mother!'+ and 'Anyone who says anything bad about his father or mother must be killed'.+ **5**But you people say that a person can say to his father or mother, 'I have given God the money that I could have used to help you.' **6**And so that person doesn't have to honor his father. And you have taken all the power and authority out of God's Word because of these laws that have been handed down to you. **7**You're just pretending to be God's people. And Isaiah was certainly writing about you people when he said,

8 'This nation honors Me with their lips,
but their hearts are far away from Me.

9 Their worship doesn't mean a thing,
because their teachings are man-made rules'."+

10Then Jesus called the crowd together and said to them, "Please listen and try to understand this.

11It's not what goes into the mouth that makes a person 'unclean'. It's what comes out of the mouth that makes him 'unclean'."*

12Afterwards Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "Do You realize that what You said hurt the Pharisees' feelings?"

13Jesus answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hasn't planted will be pulled out by the roots.

14You must stay away from them! They are blind

leaders. And when a blind man leads another blind man, both of them will fall into the ditch."

15Then Peter said to Jesus, "Tell us what You mean by the things going in and coming out of the mouth."

16And Jesus replied, "After all this time, are you men also so stupid? **17**Don't you understand that everything which goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and then is emptied out into the toilet? **18**But the things which come out of the mouth come out of the heart; and these are the things which make a person 'unclean'. **19**You see, out of a person's heart come wicked thoughts, which lead to murder, adultery and all kinds of sexual sins, and thoughts which lead a person to tell lies about other people, and say nasty and insulting things. **20**These are the things which make a person 'unclean'; but eating without washing your hands doesn't make anyone 'unclean'."

Jesus Heals a Canaanite Woman's Daughter

21Then Jesus left Gennesaret and went to the area around Tyre and Sidon,* **22**where He met a remarkable woman. She was a Canaanite who lived in that area, and when she came out to meet Jesus, she was screaming, "Lord! Son of David! Take pity on me! My daughter has a demon inside of her, and he does terrible things to her!"

23But Jesus didn't give her any answer, not a single word.

And soon Jesus' followers came and asked Him to send her away. "She's following along behind us, screaming all the time," they said.

24So Jesus said to the woman. "I was sent out to find only the lost sheep in the nation of Israel."

25Then the woman came up to Jesus and fell on her knees in front of Him with her forehead on the ground.* "Lord," she said, "help me!"

26And Jesus answered, "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to your pet dogs."

27"Yes Lord, You're right," said the woman. "But even those pet dogs eat the scraps of food which fall to the floor from their master's table."

28Then Jesus said to her, "My dear, you have great faith, and what you want must be done." And from that moment the woman's daughter was perfectly well.

Jesus Heals Many Sick People

29Then Jesus left Tyre and returned to Galilee. And one day, as He was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, He went up into the hills and sat down.

30And then a big crowd of people came to Him. They brought with them people who were crippled, deformed, deaf, dumb and blind, and many others, and put them down in front of Jesus, and He healed them. **31**And the crowds were astonished when they saw dumb people talking, deformed people who were now perfectly well, crippled people walking around, and blind people seeing. And they began to praise Israel's God.

Jesus Feeds Four Thousand Men

32Then Jesus called His followers together and said to them, "I feel sorry for this crowd of people, because they have been staying here with me for almost three days, and now they don't have anything to eat. I don't want to send them away without eating, because I'm afraid they won't have strength enough to walk home."

33His followers replied, "Where can we find enough food to feed a crowd of people like this out here where there are no farms or cities?"

34"How many little loaves of bread* do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they answered, "and a few small fish."

35Then Jesus ordered the crowd to stretch out on the ground. **36**Next He took the seven little loaves of bread and the fish, and said a prayer of thanksgiving. Then He broke them into pieces, and kept on giving them to His followers, and they kept on giving them to the crowds.

37 So everyone there ate until they were full. And afterwards they carried away seven very large baskets of broken pieces that were left over. **38** And there were four thousand men who were eating, besides the women and children. **39** Then Jesus sent the crowds away, and got into the boat and went to the district of Magadan.*

The Jews Ask for a Special Miracle

16 When Jesus got there, some Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to see Him. And as a test they asked Jesus to have God do a special miracle for them.

2 Jesus answered, "In the late afternoon you say, 'It will be a nice day tomorrow, because the sky is red.' **3** And early in the morning you say, 'Stormy weather today, because the sky is red and full of clouds.' You can look at the sky and tell what the weather's going to be, but you aren't able to look at the things that are happening all around you and tell what they mean. **4** It's a wicked and unfaithful group of people who ask God for a special miracle. And the only miracle God will do for you is the miracle of Jonah." And then Jesus left them and sailed away.

Jesus Warns His Followers against the Pharisees

6 Soon Jesus said to His followers, "You must watch out, and be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

7a This got them started talking among themselves, **5** because they had forgotten to take along any food on their trip across the lake. **7b** So now they were saying, "He must have said this because we didn't bring along any bread."

8 Of course Jesus knew what they were saying and thinking; so He said to them, "Why are you talking about not having any bread? Your faith is so small. **9** Can it be that you still don't know what I mean? Don't you remember the five little loaves of bread and the five thousand men, and how many big baskets you

picked up? ¹⁰Or the seven little loaves of bread and the four thousand men, and how many bigger baskets you picked up? ¹¹How is it that you don't understand that I wasn't talking to you about bread? But you must be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

¹²Then they realized that He hadn't told them to be on their guard against the yeast used in making bread, but against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What the People were Saying about Jesus

¹³Then Jesus went to the district around Caesarea Philippi.* And one day He asked His followers, "Who do people say the Son of Man* is?"

¹⁴And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

¹⁵"But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶And Simon Peter answered. "You are the Messiah,* the Son of the living God."

Jesus Talks about His Church

^{17a}Then Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, Jonah's son, ^{18a}I'm telling you that from now on your name will be Peter.* ^{17b}And you're a truly happy man, because no human being has told you that I'm the Messiah. It was my Father in heaven, who told you this.* ^{18b}And I will build my Church on this rock, and the powers of hell will never destroy it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. And the door you lock here on earth will already be locked in heaven, and the door you unlock here on earth will already be unlocked in heaven." ²⁰And then He gave His followers strict orders not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah.

Jesus Tells His Followers about His Coming Death

21From that time on Jesus began to make it clear to His followers that He had to go to Jerusalem. And He told them that the members of the Council,* the head priests,* and the scribes,* would make Him go through a lot of suffering, and kill Him. But He also told them that He would be raised back to life on the third day.

22Then Peter took Jesus off where he could talk to Him alone, and began to scold Him. "Lord," he said, "God loves You. He would never let this happen to You!"

23And Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You're trying to make me stumble and fall into sin, because your mind isn't filled with God's thoughts, but with men's thoughts."

Jesus Talks about Being His Followers

24Then Jesus said to His followers, "If a person really wants to be my follower, he must forget about himself, put his cross on his shoulders, and follow along behind me all the time. **25**You see, the person who wants to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will find it. **26**After all, what will a person gain if he becomes the owner of the whole world, but destroys his own Life? Or what kind of a ransom could a person ever pay to get his Life back?

27"Remember that the Son of Man is going to come with all His angels and His Father's shining heavenly beauty. And when He comes, 'He will repay every person for what he has done'.⁺ **28**And I'm telling you the truth when I say that some of the people who are standing here will not die until they see the Son of Man coming as the King."

Jesus Shows His Followers His Heavenly Beauty

17 Six days later Jesus took Peter, and the brothers James and John along with Him, and led them up

a high mountain,* where they could be alone. ²And there Jesus was changed, right before their eyes, so that He looked like a different person. His face was shining like the sun, and His clothes turned as white as light. ³And then a wonderful thing happened. Suddenly they saw Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus!

⁴And when Peter had a chance to speak, he said to Jesus, "Lord, it's wonderful for us to be here. If You want me to, I'll make three tents here, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵And while Peter was still talking an amazing thing happened. Suddenly there was a cloud that was all lit up* right over their heads, shading them from the sun. And then another amazing thing - there was a voice coming out of the cloud! "This is My Son," it said, "My own dear Son, who has made Me very happy. You must listen to Him!"

⁶When Jesus' followers heard this, they were terribly frightened, and they fell face down on the ground. ⁷But Jesus went over to them and touched them, and said, "Get up, and don't be afraid." ⁸And when they raised their heads and looked up, they didn't see anyone except Jesus. He was all alone.

⁹Later, as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them these orders, "Don't tell anyone about what you have seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

John the Baptist was the Second Elijah

¹⁰Then the three followers asked Jesus, "Why then do the scribes* say that Elijah has to come first?"

¹¹And Jesus answered, "Certainly Elijah is going to come. And he will get everything all set up again. ¹²But I'm telling you that Elijah has already come, but the people didn't recognize him. Yes, they have done whatever they wanted to him. And they're going to treat the Son of Man in exactly the same way."

¹³Then His followers understood that He was talking to them about John the Baptist.

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon inside of Him

14When they got back to the crowd, a man came up to Jesus and got down on his knees in front of Him.*

15Then he said, "Lord, have pity on my son. He has epilepsy,* and terrible things happen to him. You see, many times he falls into the fire, and many times into the water. **16**I brought him to Your followers, but they weren't able to make him well."

17Jesus answered, "You Israelites of today have no faith at all. And you're not living the way God wants at all. How long do I have to be with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy here to me!"

18And then Jesus gave the demon a good scolding, and he came out of the boy. And from that moment on the boy was perfectly well.

19Later Jesus' followers came to Him when they were alone and asked Him, "Why couldn't we drive out that demon?"

20And Jesus answered, "Because your faith is so small. You see, I'm telling you the truth when I say that if you have faith the size of a mustard seed,* you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there!' and it will move. Yes, nothing will be impossible for you."

Jesus Talks again about His Death

22Later, when Jesus and His followers were gathered together in Galilee, He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be given over into the hands of sinful men, **23**and they will kill Him. But He will be raised back to life on the third day." And this made them very sad.

Jesus Pays the Temple Tax

24When they got back to Capernaum, the men who collected the Temple tax came to Peter and said, "Your teacher pays the Temple tax, doesn't he?"

25"Of course," said Peter.

But when Peter came back to the house, Jesus asked him this question before Peter had a chance to say anything, "Simon, what do you think about this? From whom do the kings of the world collect tolls and taxes? Do they collect them from their own citizens, or from the citizens of other countries?"

26 And Peter answered, "They collect them from the citizens of other countries."

"Well then," said Jesus, "their own citizens don't have to pay taxes. **27** But we don't want the Temple officials to get any wrong ideas about us. So you go down to the lake and drop a hook into the water. Then take the first fish you catch and open its mouth, and you'll find a stater.* Take that and give it to the tax collectors to pay my tax and yours too."

ROMAN
STATER



U. S.
PENNY

Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?

18 On that same day Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "Who is the greatest person in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

2 So Jesus called a little child, and stood him up where they could all see him. **3** Then He said, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that if you aren't changed, so that you become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. **4** Therefore the greatest person in the Kingdom of Heaven is the one who puts himself in the lowest place, like this little child.

5 And anyone of my followers who is a friend to one little child like this is my friend. **6** But if someone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to lose his faith, that person would be better off if a big millstone was hung around his neck and he was drowned in the middle of the ocean.

Jesus Talks about Losing One's Faith

7"How terrible it's going to be for the unbelievers who do things which cause believers to fall into sin and lose their faith! Such things are sure to happen, but how terrible it's going to be for the person who does such a thing. **8**And if your hand or foot is causing you to fall into sin and lose your faith, cut it off and throw it away. It's better for you to go into the next Life without a hand or a foot than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. **9**And if your eye is causing you to fall into sin and lose your faith, gouge it out and throw it away. It's better for you to go into the next Life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fires of hell.

10"Watch out so that you don't treat any one of these little ones as if they're of no importance, for I'm telling you that they have angels in heaven who are always right beside my heavenly Father.

The Story of the Lost Sheep

12"What do you think a man does if he has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost? Won't he leave the ninety-nine there in the mountains and go and look for the one that's lost? **13**And if he finds it, I'm telling you the truth when I say that he's happier over that one sheep than he is over the ninety-nine sheep who aren't lost. **14**That's exactly the way it is with your heavenly Father. He doesn't want to lose a single one of these little ones.

What to Do When Others Fall into Sin

15"If your brother sins against you, go and talk to him about his sin, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back. **16**But if he doesn't listen to you, take one or two other people along with you the next time, so that 'there will be two or three witnesses to hear everything that is said'.⁺ **17**And if he won't listen to them, tell the Church about it. And if he won't even listen to the

Church, you must treat him like a foreigner or a tax collector.*

18"I'm telling you the truth when I say that whatever doors you lock here on earth are immediately locked in heaven, and whatever doors you unlock here on earth are immediately unlocked in heaven.

19"And I'm telling you again that if two of you here on earth agree when you ask for something, no matter what it is, my heavenly Father will give you what you ask for. **20**You see, where two or three people are gathered together as my followers, I'm right there with them."

We Must Forgive as God Forgives Us

21Then Peter came to Jesus and said to Him, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother if he keeps on sinning against me? Should I forgive him as many as seven times?"

22"No", said Jesus, "I'm not telling you to forgive him as many as seven times. I'm telling you to forgive him as many as seventy times seven times.

23"This is why the Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who wanted to go over his accounts with some of his people. **24**He had just begun to do so, when one man was brought in who owed him ten thousand talents.* **25**But since the man wasn't able to pay what he owed, his master said that he must be sold as a slave, together with his wife and children and everything he had, to pay the debt.

26"When the man heard this, he fell down on his knees in front of the king, with his forehead on the ground.* 'Be patient with me,' he said, 'and I'll pay you everything I owe.'

27"And that king felt sorry for his slave. So he set him free and cancelled the whole debt.

28"But then that slave left the palace, and went and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred dinars.* He grabbed the man and began to

choke him. 'Pay me back what you owe me!' he said.

29"And his friend fell down on his knees in front of him and began to beg. 'Give me a little time,' he said, 'and I'll pay you back.'

30"But that man wouldn't do it. Instead, he went and had his fellow slave thrown in jail, until he paid back what he owed him.

31"But when the other slaves saw what had happened, they felt very bad about it. So they went and told their master the whole story.

32"Then the king called the man in and said to him, 'What a wicked slave you are. I cancelled that whole debt of yours when you begged me for mercy. **33**Didn't that mean that you also must have mercy on your fellow slave, just as I had mercy on you?' **34**And now the master was so angry that he handed that man over to his soldiers and told them to punish that man and keep him in jail until he paid back his whole debt.

35"That's exactly what my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you don't forgive your brother freely and willingly."

Jesus Leaves Galilee for Judea

Fall, 28

19 When Jesus finished telling this story, He left Galilee and went to that part of Judea which is on the east side of the Jordan river. **2**And great crowds of people followed Him, and He healed those who were sick.

Jesus Talks about Marriage and Divorce

3One day some Pharisees* came up to Jesus. They were testing Him, trying to get Him to say something wrong, and they said to Him, "Does the Law allow a man to divorce his wife for whatever reason he wishes?"

4Jesus answered, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'?⁺ **5**And then He said, 'For this reason a man must leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and

the two will become one body'.⁺ **6**That means that they are no longer two persons, but one body. Therefore no human being must ever separate what God has joined together."

7The Pharisees answered, "Why then did Moses give the commandment that a man could 'give his wife a notice of separation and then divorce her'?"⁺

8Jesus answered, "Moses gave you permission to divorce your wives because you won't listen to God, or believe what He says. But at the beginning it wasn't like that. **9**And I'm telling you that any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is living with someone who isn't his wife, unless his wife has had sex with some other man".*

10Then Jesus' followers said to Him, "If this is the way things are with a man and his wife, it's better not to get married."

11Jesus answered, "Not everyone will understand what I'm saying. The only ones who will are those whom God has given the wisdom to understand it."

12You see, there are some men who aren't physically able to be married because they are born that way. And there are some who aren't physically able to be married because others have made them that way. And there are some who decide to remain unmarried because of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever is able to understand this must try to do so."

Jesus and the Little Children

13Then some people brought their little children to Jesus and asked Him to put His hands on them and pray for them; but His followers scolded them.

14Jesus however told His followers, "You must let the little children come to me. And don't try to stop them! After all, the Kingdom of Heaven is made up of people just like them." **15**Then He put His hands on them, asking God to bless them, and left that town.

Jesus Talks about Rich People

16Then an interesting thing happened. A man came to Jesus and said to Him, "Rabbi,* what good thing must I do to have eternal Life?"

17And Jesus replied, "Why are you asking me about what is good? There's only one Good Person. But if you want to get into the real Life, you must keep the commandments."

18Then the man asked, "Which ones?"

And Jesus answered, " 'You must not kill! You must not have sex with anyone except your own husband or wife! You must not steal! You must not tell lies about other people! **19**You must honor your father and mother!"+ and 'You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself!"+

20Then the young man said to Jesus, "I have kept all these commandments. What else is there that I haven't done?"

21And Jesus replied, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your belongings, and give the money to the poor. Then you will have a great treasure in heaven. And after that, come and live with me as one of my students."*

22When the young man heard this, he went away feeling very sad, because he had a lot of money and property.

23So Jesus said to His followers, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that it will be very hard for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. **24**Yes, I'll say it again. It's easier for a large rope* to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into God's Kingdom."

25When Jesus' followers heard that, they were so amazed that they didn't know what to think. So they asked, "Well then, who can be saved?"

26And Jesus looked them right in the eye and said, "It isn't possible for any person to save himself, but

for God everything is possible."

27Then Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "Look at us. We have given up everything we had and have lived with You as your students. So what are we going to have?"

28And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that when everything is made new again and the Son of Man* is sitting on His beautiful throne, you men who have lived with me as my students will also be sitting on twelve thrones, ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel. **29**Yes, every person who has left his home, or his brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or his farm for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much, plus eternal Life as God's child and heir. **30**But many who are first now will be last, and many who are last now will be first.

The Story of the Generous Farmer

20"You see, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who owned a big farm. And one day he went out before the sun was up to hire some men to work in his vineyard. **2**He agreed to pay the men a dinar* a day and sent them into the vineyard.

3About nine o'clock he went out again, and saw some other men standing there in the town square,* doing nothing. **4**So he told them, 'You men go out to my vineyard too, and I'll pay you whatever is right and fair.' **5**So they also went to the vineyard.

"About noon he went again, and at three o'clock he did the same thing. **6**And about five o'clock he went out and found some other men standing there. So he said to them, 'Why are you men standing here all day long, doing nothing?'

7"And they answered, 'Because no one has hired us.'

"So he told them, 'You go out to my vineyard too.'

8"Then at the end of the day the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the men and give them their pay. Start with the men who were hired last,

and work backwards to the first ones.'

9"And when the men who had been hired at five o'clock came in, each one was paid a dinar. **10**So when the men who had been hired first came in, they thought they were going to get more, but they were also paid one dinar each. **11**After they had been paid therefore, these men began to complain about the way the owner had treated them. **12**'These men who were hired last have done only one hour's work,' they said, 'and we have put in a long, hard day out there under the hot sun. And now you have made them equal to us.'

13"So the owner turned to one of the men and said, 'My friend, I'm not being unfair to you. You agreed with me to work for a dinar a day, didn't you? **14**Take your money and get out of here! You see, I want to pay the man who was hired last the same amount as I pay you. **15**I certainly have the right, don't I, to do what I want with my own money? Or is your greedy heart making you jealous because I'm generous?'

16"That's the way it will be in the Kingdom of Heaven," said Jesus. "Those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last."

Jesus Describes His Betrayal and Death

17One day while Jesus was still travelling towards Jerusalem,* He took His twelve apostles away from the crowds and talked to them privately as they were walking along the road. **18**"Listen carefully," He said. "We're going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man is going to be handed over to the head priests* and the scribes.* And they are going to put Him on trial and sentence Him to death. **19**Then they will hand Him over to the people of the other nations,* who will make fun of Him and whip Him and put Him on a cross. But on the third day He will be raised back to life."

James and John Ask for a Special Favor

20Later Zebedee's wife, the mother of James and John, came to Jesus with her two sons. She fell on her knees in front of Jesus, with her forehead on the

ground,* and said that she wanted to ask a favor from Him.

21"What do you want?" asked Jesus.

And she replied, "Promise me that when You are sitting on Your royal throne, these two sons of mine will sit beside You, one at Your right hand and the other at Your left."

22Jesus answered, "You don't know what you're asking for." Then He asked James and John, "Are you able to drink the cup of suffering which I'm going to drink?"

And they said, "Yes, we can."

23So Jesus replied, "You will drink my cup, but it isn't possible for me to give you permission to sit at my right hand and my left hand. That honor belongs to those whom my Father has already chosen."

24Of course when the other ten apostles heard this, they became upset and angry with the two brothers.

25So Jesus called them all together and said to them, "You know that the rulers of the other nations treat their people like slaves, and the government officials show their authority by pushing people around. **26**But it mustn't be that way with you. The one who wants to become the big man in your group must be your servant. **27**And the one who wants to be the head man in your group must be your slave, **28**just like the Son of Man. He didn't come to be served. He came to serve, and to give His life as a ransom to set many people free."

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

29As Jesus and His followers were leaving the old city of Jericho,* a big crowd of people followed Him, **30**and a wonderful thing happened. There were two blind men sitting along the side of the road. When they heard that Jesus was going by, they began to yell. "Lord! Son of David! Take pity on us!"

31The crowd however scolded the men and told

them to be quiet; but they just yelled all the louder, "Lord! Son of David! Take pity on us!"

32 Then Jesus stopped and called out to them, "What do you want me to do for you?"

33 And they replied, "Lord, we want You to open our eyes."

34 And since Jesus felt sorry for them, He touched their eyes, and right away they could see again. And they followed along behind Him.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Spring, 29, Sunday

21 When Jesus and His followers got closer to Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage, which is on Mount Olive.* And then Jesus sent out two of His followers with these orders - **2**"Go into the village over there,* and right away you'll find a donkey tied up, with her colt beside her.* Untie them and bring them to me. **3**And if anyone says anything to you, tell him, 'Our Master needs them, and He'll send them back right away'." **4**This happened so that what the Lord said through the prophet would come true -

5 "Tell the daughter of Zion,
'Look! Your King is coming to you.
He is kind and gentle to others,
and riding on a donkey,*
on a colt, a young donkey'."†

6 So His followers went and did exactly what Jesus had told them to do. **7** They brought the donkey and the colt, and threw their long outer cloaks over them, and Jesus rode on them.

8 Most of the crowd spread their long outer cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. **9** And the crowds who were walking in front of Jesus and the crowds who were following along behind Him were all yelling,

"Lord, save us by the Son of David!

'God's blessing on the one who comes
as the Lord's messenger'! †

Save us, O Lord in heaven!"

10And after Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar. The people were asking, "Who is this man?"

11And the crowds kept on telling them, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus Cleans out the Temple-yard

Monday

18*Early the next morning, as Jesus was on His way back to the city, He got hungry. **19**And when He saw a fig tree by the side of the road, He went up to it, but He didn't find anything but leaves on it. So He said to the tree, "Don't you ever bear any fruit again - never!" And the fig tree dried up immediately!

12And when Jesus went into the Temple-yard,*He drove out all the men who were selling and buying things there. He tipped over the bankers' tables, and the chairs of the men who were selling pigeons. **13**And as He did so, He said to them, "The Bible says, 'My house will be called a house of prayer',⁺ but you are making it 'a hideout for robbers'."⁺

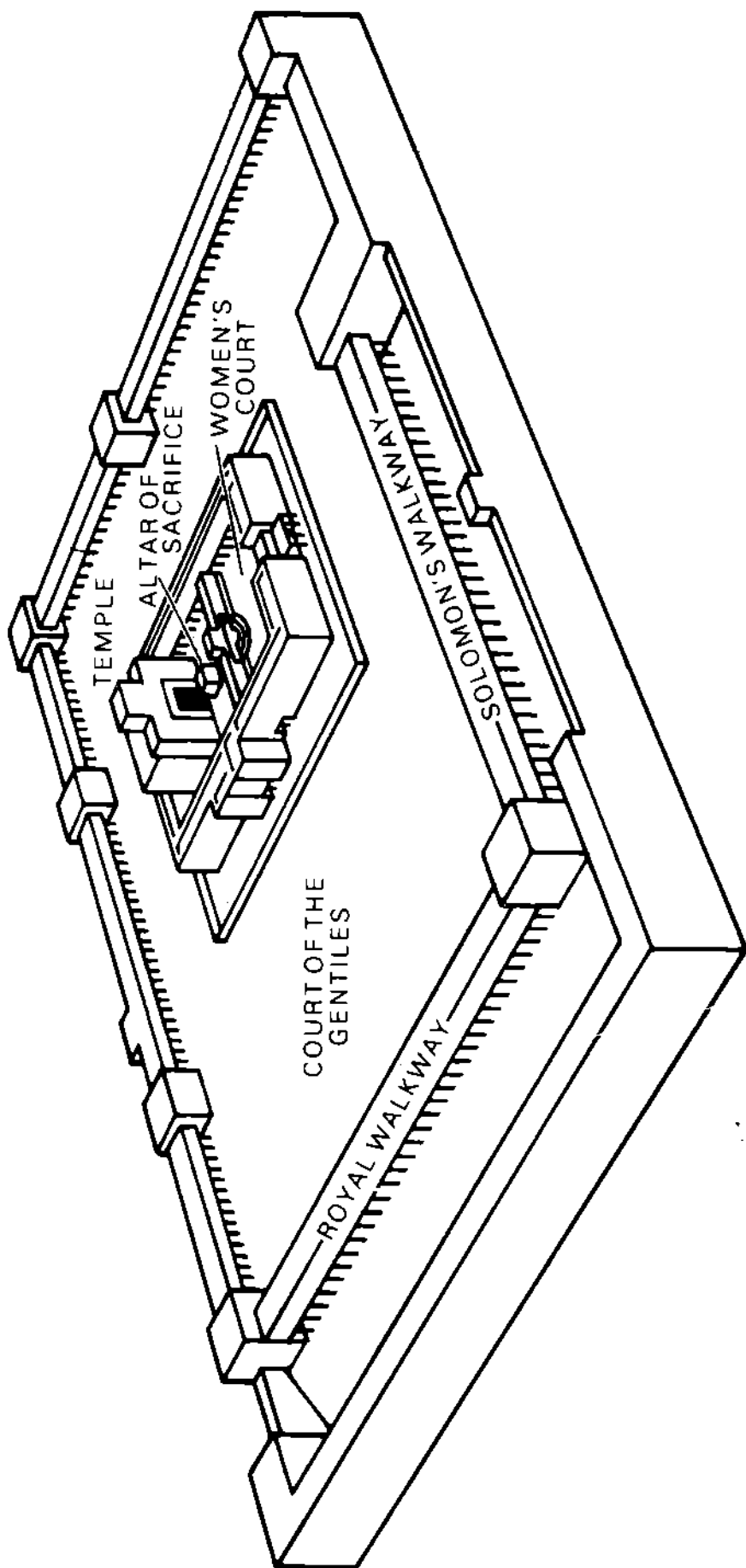
14And while Jesus was there in the Temple-yard, some blind and crippled people came up to Him, and He healed them. **15**But the head priests* and the scribes* became upset and angry when they saw the wonderful things He was doing, and heard the children in the Temple-yard screaming, "O Lord, save us by the Son of David!" **16**So they came to Jesus and said to Him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

"Yes," said Jesus. "Haven't you ever read this verse of the Bible? 'You have made the perfect song of praise from the mouths of little children and nursing babies'."⁺ **17**Then He walked away from them out of the Temple-yard and left the city, and went to Bethany, where He spent the night.

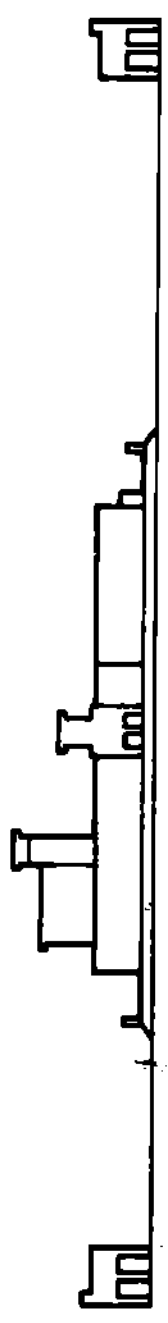
They Pass by the Fig Tree

Tuesday

20The next morning when Jesus' followers saw the fig tree, they were astonished. "How did this fig tree



THE TEMPLE-YARD



CROSS SECTION

dry up so quickly?" they asked.

21Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that if you have faith and aren't filled with doubts, you can do even more than I did to this fig tree. You can even say to God, 'Pick this mountain up, and throw it into the ocean!' and God will do it! **22**Yes, if you have faith, you will get everything you ask for in your prayers."

The Jews Challenge Jesus' Authority

23After Jesus went into the Temple-yard,* He was explaining the Bible* to the people. So the head priests and some of the Council* members came up to Him and said, "What kind of authority do you have to be doing things like this?"

And some of the others said, "And who gave you this authority?"

24Jesus answered, "I'm also going to ask you a question. And if you will answer it, I'll tell you what kind of authority I have to be doing these things. **25**What about John's baptizing? Where did his authority come from? Was it from heaven or from men?"

So they began to talk this over among themselves. "If we say, 'From heaven,' he'll say to us, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' **26**But if we say, 'From men,' we're afraid of the crowd, because everyone believes John was a prophet."

27So they answered, "We don't know."

And Jesus replied, "Then neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to be doing these things."

The Story of the Two Sons

28"But what do you think about this?" said Jesus to the head priests and Council members, "A man had two sons. One day he went to the older son and said to him, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

29"And the young man replied, 'I don't want to.' But later he changed his mind and went.

30"Then the father went to the other son and told him the same thing. This son answered, 'I'm going, sir!' But he didn't go.

31"Which one of the two did what his father wanted?" Jesus asked.

And the head priests and Council members answered, "The older one."

Then Jesus said to them, "And I'm telling you the truth when I say that the tax collectors* and the prostitutes are going into God's Kingdom ahead of you. **32**For John came to you walking on the Road* that will make people perfectly holy in God's sight, and you didn't believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes did believe him. And even after you saw all this, you didn't change your minds and believe him."

The Story of the Wicked Farmers

33Then Jesus said, "Listen! Here's another story. A man who owned a big farm 'planted a field full of grape vines. Then he built a wall around it, and carved out a large round bowl in a big rock, where they could put the grapes to squeeze the juice out of them, and built a tower for a watchman'.⁺ And then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and left home on a trip.

34"When it got close to the time to pick the grapes, the owner sent some of his slaves to the farmers to collect his share of the crop. **35**But the farmers grabbed his slaves and beat one of them up, killed another one, and threw stones at the third one. **36**So the owner sent some other slaves, more of them than the first time; but the farmers did the same thing to them.

37"Finally the man sent his son to them. 'They'll have some respect for my son,' he thought.

38"But when the farmers saw his son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir who will own everything when his father dies. Come on! Let's kill him and take all his property.' **39**So they grabbed him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40"Now then, when the owner of the vineyard comes home, what will he do to those farmers?" Jesus asked.

41And the priests and Council members answered, "He'll destroy those evil men in a painful way, and then he'll rent out the vineyard to some other farmers who will give him his share of the crop every year when the time comes to pick the grapes."

42Then Jesus replied, "Haven't you ever read in the Bible,

'A stone which the builders decided was no good
is the very one which has become the cornerstone.
It's the Lord who did this,
and we think it's wonderful'?^{†*}

43"This is why I'm telling you that God's Kingdom will be taken away from you, and will be given to a nation that will do the things God wants in His Kingdom."

45When the head priests and the Pharisees heard these stories of His, they knew that Jesus was talking about them. **46**And though they were trying to find a way to arrest Jesus, they were afraid of the crowds, because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.

The Story of the Big Wedding Dinner

22 Then Jesus told the head priests* and the Pharisees* another story. **2**"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who made plans for a wedding party for his son. **3**And when everything was ready, he sent out some of his slaves to tell the people who had been invited that they should come to the party. But they didn't want to come.

4"So the king sent out some other slaves with these orders - 'Tell the people who have been invited, "Look! My breakfast* is all ready. My steers and the fattened calves are all butchered. Everything is ready. Come to the wedding party!"'

5"But the people paid no attention, and walked away from the king's slaves. One of them went out to his farm, another one started out on a business trip, **6**and

the rest of them grabbed the king's slaves and beat them up and killed them.

7"That made the king angry, and he sent his soldiers and killed those people who had murdered his slaves, and then he burned down their city. **8**Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding party is all ready, but the people I invited weren't fit to come. **9**Therefore go out to the crossroads, where the roads branch out in different directions, and invite all the people you can find to come to my wedding party.'

10"So those slaves went out on the highways, and gathered together all the people they could find, both bad and good. And finally every place at the banquet tables was filled with guests.*

11"But when the king came in to take a look at the people who were eating dinner, he saw a man there who wasn't wearing a wedding robe.* **12**So he said to the man, 'My friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?'

"But the man didn't say a word.

13"So then the king said to his servants, 'Tie this man up hand and foot, and throw him outside into the darkness, where the people will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain.'

14"And the lesson is that in the Kingdom of Heaven many people are invited, but only a few are chosen."

The Jews Lay a Trap for Jesus

15Then the Pharisees went off and talked about how they could catch Jesus in a trap by using a trick question. **16**So they sent some of their followers to Him, along with some of Herod's followers, and asked Him this question - "Rabbi,* we know you're a man who always tells the truth, and that you always teach people the truth about God's Road.* And we know that you don't worry about what anyone says or thinks, because you don't judge people by their outward appearance. **17**Tell us therefore, what do you think? Does

the Law allow us to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor or not?"

18But Jesus knew all about their wicked plan. So He said to them, "You people are just pretending to be interested in paying taxes. Why are you trying to trick me into saying something wrong? **19**Show me the coin people use to pay their taxes."

And when they brought Him a dinar,* **20**He said to them, "Whose face and name is this?"

A DINAR OF
TIBERIUS



U. S.
PENNY

21"The Emperor's".* they answered.

"Well then," said Jesus, "pay the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor, and pay God what belongs to God."

22When the Pharisees heard this answer, they were so astonished that they left Him and walked away.

The Sadducees Also Question Jesus

23That same day some of the Sadducees* came up to Jesus. The Sadducees say that the dead can't come back to life, so they said to Him, **24**"Rabbi, Moses said, 'If a man dies without having any children, his brother must marry the widow and raise a family for his dead brother'.⁺

25"And once there were seven brothers living here. The oldest one got married, and then died. And since he didn't have any children, he left his widow to his brother. **26**But the same thing also happened to the second brother, and then to the third brother, and right down the line to the seventh brother. **27**And last of all, the woman died. **28**So our question is, when the dead come back to life, which of the seven brothers will be her husband? After all, they all had her as their wife."

29 Jesus answered, "You're all confused because you don't know the Bible, or anything about God's power. **30** You see, when the dead come back to life, men and women aren't going to get married. Instead, they'll be like the angels in heaven. **31** And while we're talking about dead people coming back to life, haven't you read what God told you where He says, **32** 'I AM* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?⁺ He certainly isn't a God of dead people, but of living people."

33 When the crowds heard this, they were completely amazed at the way He explained the Bible.*

Which is the Greatest Commandment?

34 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had shut the Sadducees up, they all gathered together around Him. **35** And one of them who was a scribe* asked Jesus a question, trying to get Him to say something wrong. **36** "Rabbi," he said, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul',⁺ and all your mind. **38** This is the greatest and most important commandment. **39** But there's a second one which is just as great - 'You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself!'⁺ **40** The whole Law and the writings of the prophets are built on these two commandments."

Jesus Asks the Pharisees a Question

41 Then while the Pharisees were all gathered together, Jesus asked them a question. **42** "What do you think about the Messiah?"* He asked. "Whose son is He?"

"David's," they answered.

43 And Jesus replied, "Then how is it that the Spirit led David to call Him 'Lord'? For David says,

44 'The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit down here at My right hand

until I put Your enemies under Your feet".⁺

45 Since David therefore calls Him 'Lord,' how can

He be his son?"

46Not one of them could give Him any answer. And from that time on no one dared to ask Jesus any question.

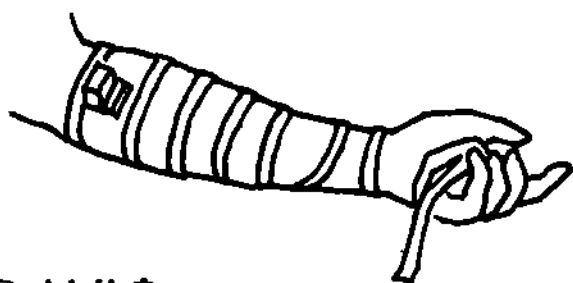
Jesus Warns the People against Their Leaders

23 Then Jesus began to speak to the crowds of people and to His own followers. **2**"The scribes and the Pharisees, have taken over Moses' place as your teachers. **3**Therefore you must do and obey everything they tell you. But you mustn't be doing the things they're doing, because they aren't doing the things they're telling you to do. **4**They tie up heavy loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they won't lift a finger to help them carry those loads. **5**And they do everything so that people will see what they're doing.

"For example, they make big memory boxes* to wear on their foreheads and arms, and they wear large tassels* on their long outer cloaks. **6**They also love to have the place of honor* at the dinner parties, and the special chairs in the meeting houses.* **7**And they love to be greeted as important people in the town squares,* and to have other people call them 'Rabbi'.*



MEMORY BOXES ON
FOREHEAD AND ARM



8"But you mustn't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you're all brothers, and you have only one Teacher. **9**And you mustn't call anyone here on earth 'Father,' for your one and only Father is in heaven. **10**And you mustn't let anyone call you 'Master,' for your one and only Master is the Messiah.* **11**The greatest one in your group must be your servant. **12**For the one who puts himself in a high place will be brought down to

the lowest place, and the one who puts himself in a low place will be raised up to a high place."*

13"You scribes and Pharisees are hypocrites, just pretending to be God's people. But how terrible it's going to be for you, because you're locking the door into the Kingdom of Heaven right in other people's faces. It isn't only that you aren't going in, but you aren't letting others go in who are trying to get in.

15"You scribes and Pharisees are just pretending to be God's people. How terrible it's going to be for you, because you travel over land and sea to make one new follower, and when you get him, you make him a child of hell who is twice as bad as you are.

16"How terrible it's going to be for you blind leaders. You say, 'If a person swears "by the Temple," his promise means nothing; but if he swears "by the gold in the Temple," he must do what he promises.' **17**You blind fools! After all, which is greater? - the gold, or the Temple which makes the gold holy?

18"You say, 'If a person swears "by the altar," his promise means nothing, but if he swears "by the gift on top of the altar," he must do what he promises.'

19You're blind! After all, which is greater? - the gift, or the altar which makes the gift holy?

20"Therefore the person who swears 'by the altar' is swearing by the altar and by everything on the altar.

21And the person who swears 'by the Temple' is swearing by the Temple and by the One who lives in the Temple. **22**And the person who swears 'by Heaven' is swearing by God's throne and by the One who is sitting on it.

23"You scribes and Pharisees are hypocrites, just pretending to be God's people. How terrible it's going to be for you, because you keep on paying God a tenth of your mint and dill and cummin, but you have forgotten the more important things in the Law, like justice and mercy and faithfulness. These are the things you should have done without forgetting the others. **24**You blind leaders! You're straining the fly out of your

cup and gulping down the camel.

25"You scribes and Pharisees are just pretending to be God's people. How terrible it's going to be for you, because you keep on cleaning up the outside of your cups and dishes,* but the inside is full of violence and greed. **26**You blind Pharisees! First clean up the inside of the cup, but do it so that the outside will also be clean.

27"You scribes and Pharisees are just pretending to be God's people. How terrible it's going to be for you, because you're like graves which are painted white.* From the outside they look beautiful, but inside they're full of dead men's bones and every kind of filth and dirt. **28**That's exactly the way you are. When people look at you from the outside, you look like men who never do anything wrong. But inside you're full of lawlessness and hypocrisy, pretending to be something you aren't.

29"You scribes and Pharisees are just pretending to be God's people. How terrible it's going to be for you, because you keep on building tombs for the prophets, and you decorate the graves of the great men of God. **30**And you keep on saying, 'If we had been living in the days of our forefathers, we wouldn't have joined them in killing the prophets.' **31**But by building the tombs you're telling everybody that you are true descendants of those people who murdered the prophets. **32**And so you must finish up what your forefathers started. **33**You snakes! You nest of rattlesnakes! How are you ever going to escape being condemned to hell?

34"This is why you must listen to this -

I'm the One who is sending you
prophets and wise men and scribes.
Some of them you will kill and put on a cross,
and some of them you will whip in your
local courts,
and hunt them down like animals from one
city to the next.

35 I'm doing this so that you will be held responsible for the murder of every man of God, whose blood has been poured out upon the ground, from the murder of Abel, who was perfectly holy in God's sight,* to the murder of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the Temple and the altar'.⁺*

36 I'm telling you the truth when I say that the Israelites who are living today will be held responsible for all these murders.

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you're the city which is always killing the prophets and stoning to death those whom God sends to you. How many times I have wanted to gather your people together, like a hen gathers her little chicks under her wings; but you wouldn't let me. **38** Now hear this! 'You're going to become an empty house in which there are no people'.⁺ **39** For I'm telling you that from now on you will never see me again until you say, 'God's blessings on the One who is coming as the Lord's messenger'!"⁺

The Future Destruction of the Temple

24 Then Jesus left the Temple-yard. And as He walked along, His followers came up to Him and pointed out to Him the great stones of the temple walls.*

² Jesus answered, "You aren't seeing the whole picture. I'm telling you the truth when I say that every stone here will be thrown to the ground, until there isn't a single one left standing on another one."*

Jesus Talks about the End of the World

³ Later Jesus was resting on Mount Olive.* And since He and the apostles were now all alone, some of them came up to Him and said, "Tell us when this will be, and what will happen to show us that it's time for Your return and the end of the world."

⁴ Jesus answered, "Watch out so that someone doesn't

fool you and lead you astray. ⁵You see, a lot of men will come using my name and saying, 'I'm the Messiah'.* And they will fool a lot of people and lead them astray.

⁶"And you're going to hear the sounds of wars close by, and the news of wars far away. But watch yourselves and don't be frightened and upset. You see, these things have to happen, but it will be a while yet before the end comes. ⁷Nations will attack each other, and kingdoms will go to war against each other. And there will be famines and earthquakes in all kinds of places. ⁸And all these things are like the first pains that a woman has before her child is born.

⁹"Later people will have you arrested to be tortured, and they will kill you, and you will be hated by the people of all the nations because you're my followers.

¹⁰And at that time many people will lose their faith, and they will betray each other and hate each other.

¹¹And many false prophets will appear, and they will fool a lot of people and lead them astray. ¹²The world will be filled with lawlessness, and because of this the love of many of my followers will grow cold. ¹³But the person who patiently holds on to his faith to the end will be saved.

¹⁴"And this Good News about the Kingdom will be spread throughout the whole world, as my followers tell the people of all the nations* what they have seen and heard and know. And then the end will come.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

¹⁵"Through the prophet Daniel the Lord spoke about 'that filthy, disgusting thing that destroys everything it touches'.* And the one who reads this had better pay attention! So when you see this awful thing standing in the Holy Place,* ¹⁶the people in Judea must try to escape into the hills. ¹⁷The man who is on the roof of his house must not go back down to take his belongings out of the house; ¹⁸and the man who is out in the field must not go back home to get his long outer cloak. ¹⁹How terrible it will be at that time

for women who are going to have a child and those who are nursing their babies. ²⁰And you must pray that you won't have to make your escape in the winter, or on a Saturday,* ²¹for that will be a time of 'great suffering, so great that until now there has never been anything like it since the world began',* nor ever will be again. ²²But because of His chosen people God has already decided to make that time of suffering a short one. If He hadn't done so, not one single person would ever be saved.

²³"At that time if someone says to you, 'Look! Here's the Messiah!' or 'He's here!' don't believe it. ²⁴You see, there will be false Messiahs and false prophets rising up, and they will work great miracles and do wonderful things, trying to fool even God's chosen people and lead them astray, if such a thing is possible. ²⁵Remember that I have warned you ahead of time!

²⁶"So if people say to you, 'Look! He's out in the desert,' don't go out there. If they say, 'Look! He's in some secret room,' don't believe it. ²⁷For the Son of Man's* arrival will be just like a flash of lightning, which suddenly blazes out in the eastern sky and flashes all the way across to the west. ²⁸Wherever there's a dead body, there will be a flock of vultures gathered around it.

The World will End when Jesus Returns

²⁹"And right after that time of great suffering,
'the sun will become as black as night,
the moon will stop shining',⁺
and 'the stars will be falling out of the sky,'
for 'God will shake the heavens like a tree'.⁺

³⁰"And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and 'all the nations of the earth will moan and pound on their chests in grief',⁺ as they see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven',⁺ with great power and shining heavenly beauty.

³¹"And then the Son of Man will send out His angels with a loud bugle call, and 'they will gather together' His

chosen people from all four directions, 'from one end of the universe to the other'.^{†*}

32"And so you must learn a lesson from the fig tree. When the time comes that its branches become soft and green, and the leaves are budding out, you know that summer is almost here. **33**And in the same way, when you see all these things, you must know that the Son of Man is almost here, standing just outside the door.

34"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the kind of Israelites living today will never disappear until all these things happen. **35**The heavens and the earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

No One Knows the Time

36"But no one knows when that day will come, or at what time of day it will happen. Not even the angels in heaven know this, not even the Son. Only the Father knows. **37**For when the Son of Man comes, it will be just like what happened in Noah's time. **38**You see, at that time before the flood the people were feasting, drinking, marrying and being married, right up to the very day when Noah went into his houseboat. **39**And they didn't realize what was happening until the flood came and swept them all away. The Son of Man's return will be just like that.

40"On that day there will be two men out in the field. One will be taken away, the other will be left behind. **41**Two women will be grinding grain at the mill. One will be taken away, the other will be left behind.

42"Therefore you must always be awake and ready to go, because you don't know which day it will be when your Lord will be coming. **43**But you do know this, that if the man of the house knew that a robber was coming at a certain time during the night, he would stay awake and not let the robber break into his house. **44**And for this same reason you people must also be ready at all times, because the Son of

Man will come at a time when you aren't expecting him.

Faithful and Unfaithful Managers

45"What kind of a slave does a master appoint as the superintendent over his household, to give his slaves their food at the proper times? Doesn't he pick a man who is faithful and always knows what to do?

46And that slave is a truly happy man if his master comes home and finds him doing his job faithfully.

47I'm telling you the truth when I say that his master will put that man in charge of all his property.

48"But if he's a bad slave, he'll say to himself, 'My master is going to be gone for a long time.' **49**Then he'll begin to beat his fellow slaves, and spend his time eating and drinking with his drunken friends.

50And if that happens, his master will arrive back home on a day when that slave isn't expecting him, and at a time he doesn't know about. **51**And then his

master will cut him in two, and on Judgment Day he will be punished with those people who pretend to be something they aren't. And where those people will be, everyone will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain.

The Story of the Ten Girls

25 "At that time the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten young girls who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. **2**Five of the girls were foolish, and five were wise. **3**You see, when the five foolish girls took their lamps, they didn't take any oil with them. **4**But the smart girls took jars of oil along with their lamps.

5"But it was a long time before the bridegroom got there, and so the girls all got tired and began to fall asleep. **6**Then in the middle of the night someone yelled, "Here's the bridegroom! Go out and meet him!"

7"So all the girls jumped up and lit their lamps. **8**Then the foolish girls said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

9"But the wise girls answered, 'No! There will never be enough for us and for you too. You'll just have to go to the oil man and buy some for yourselves.'

10"But while they were going to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived; and the girls who were ready went in with him to the wedding dinner, and the door was locked.

11"Later on the rest of the girls came to the house. 'Please sir,' they said, 'open the door for us.'

12"But the bridegroom answered, 'I'm telling you the truth when I say that none of you are my friends.'

13"And so you must stay awake, because you don't know the day or the time of day.*

The Rich Man and His Three Slaves

14"You see, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was getting ready to leave home and go on a trip. He called his slaves and handed over everything he owned to them. **15**He gave one man five talents,* another man two talents, and another man one talent. The amount each slave received depended on what he was able to do. Then the owner started out on his trip.

16"Right away the man who got the five talents went out and put his money to work and made five more talents. **17**The man who got the two talents did the same thing. He went out and made two more talents. **18**But the man who got the one talent went out and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

19"Then after a long time the master came back home and began to go over his accounts with them.

20So when the man who got the five talents came in, he brought five more talents. 'Master,' he said, 'you gave me five talents to look after. Look! I have made five more talents.'

21" 'Wonderful! said his master. 'You're a good, faithful slave. You were faithful in taking care of

a few things. Now I'm going to give you a lot of things to take care of. Come into my home and share your master's happiness!"

22"Then the man who got the two talents came in. 'Master,' he said, 'you gave me two talents to look after. Look! I have made two more talents.'

23" 'Wonderful!' said his master. 'You're a good, faithful slave. You were faithful in taking care of a few things. Now I'm going to give you a lot of things to take care of. Come into my home and share your master's happiness!'

24"Next the man who had gotten the one talent came in. 'Master,' he said, 'I know you're a hard man, one who gathers in a harvest where you haven't sowed any seed, and one who gathers in grain where you haven't planted anything. **25**And so I was afraid, and I went out and buried your talent in the ground. Look! You still have your money.'

26" 'You're a wicked, lazy slave,' said his master. 'You knew that I gather in a harvest where I haven't sowed any seed, and that I gather in grain where I haven't planted anything. **27**Therefore you should have given my money to the bankers, and when I came back, I would have gotten my money back with some interest.'

28" 'Therefore take my talent away from this man and give it to the man who has the ten talents. **29**You see, "everyone who has something will get more, and will have more than he needs, but the one who has nothing, will lose even what he has."* **30**And then throw this good-for-nothing slave outside into the darkness, where the people will be crying and sobbing and grinding their teeth together in pain.'

Jesus' Description of the Final Judgment

31"But when the Son of Man comes in His shining heavenly beauty, He will have all His angels with Him. And He will sit on His beautiful throne, **32**and the people of all nations will be gathered there in front

of Him. Then He will separate them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33**He will put His sheep at His right hand and the goats at His left.

34"And then the King will say to those at His right hand, 'You people have received my Father's blessing. Come and take over the Kingdom, which God made ready to give you as His children when the world was created. **35**For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger in your town, and you took me into your homes. **36**I was naked, and you gave me clothes. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison, and you came to see me.'

37"Then those people whom God has accepted as perfectly holy in His sight* will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You a drink? **38**And when did we see You as a stranger in our town and take You into our homes, or naked and give You clothes? **39**And when did we see You sick or in prison, and come to see You?'

40"And the King will answer, 'I'm telling you the truth when I say that every time you did something for one of these brothers of mine, even the least important ones, you did it for me.'

41"Then the King will say to those at His left hand, 'You are the people whom God has cursed. Get away from me! Go into the eternal fire which God has made ready for the devil and his angels. **42**For I was hungry, but you didn't give me anything to eat. I was thirsty, but you didn't give me anything to drink. **43**I was a stranger in your town, but you didn't take me into your homes. I was naked, but you didn't give me any clothes. I was sick and in prison, but you didn't come to see me.'

44"And those people will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't take care of You?'

45"And He will answer, 'I'm telling you the truth when I say that every time you failed to do something for one of these least important ones, you failed to do it for me.'

46"So these people will go away into eternal punishment, but those people whom God has accepted as perfectly holy in His sight will go into eternal Life."*

26 When Jesus finished all these stories, He said to His followers, **2**"You know that the Passover festival* will begin two days from now,* and the Son of Man* will be handed over to be put on a cross."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

Wednesday

3The next morning the head priests* and the members of the Council* gathered together in the yard surrounding the house* of the Head Priest, whose name was Caiaphas.* **4**They decided that they would arrest Jesus by using some kind of a trick or a trap, and kill Him. **5**"But we mustn't do it during the festival," they said. "We don't want to start a riot among the people."

Jesus is Anointed at Simon the Leper's House

6aThat day Jesus was in Bethany. **7b**And He was having dinner* **6b**at the house of Simon, who had been a leper, **7a**when a woman came up to Him with a white stone jar of very expensive perfume and poured it out over His head.

8When Jesus' followers saw this, they became upset and angry. "What's the purpose of this waste?" they said to one another. **9**"After all, she could have sold this perfume for a lot of money, and given the money to the poor".*

10Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking and saying, so He said to them, "Why are you making trouble for this woman? After all, she did a fine thing for me. **11**You see, you will always have poor people around you, but you won't always have me. **12**And when she put this perfume on my body, she did it to

get me ready to be buried.*¹³I'm telling you the truth when I say that wherever the Good News is made known throughout the whole world, the story of what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Judas Makes His Bargain to Betray Jesus

¹⁴After dinner one of the twelve apostles named Judas, the Keriothan,* went to the head priests and said to them, ¹⁵"Tell me what you're willing to give me, and I'll hand Jesus over to you." 'So they counted out thirty silver shekels'*⁺ and gave them to him. ¹⁶And



JEWISH SHEKEL



U. S. PENNY

from that time on Judas began to look for a good time to hand Jesus over to them.

Jesus Prepares to Eat the Passover

Thursday

¹⁷On the first day of the festival of the No-yeast Bread,* Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "Where do You want us to get things ready for You to eat the Passover supper?"

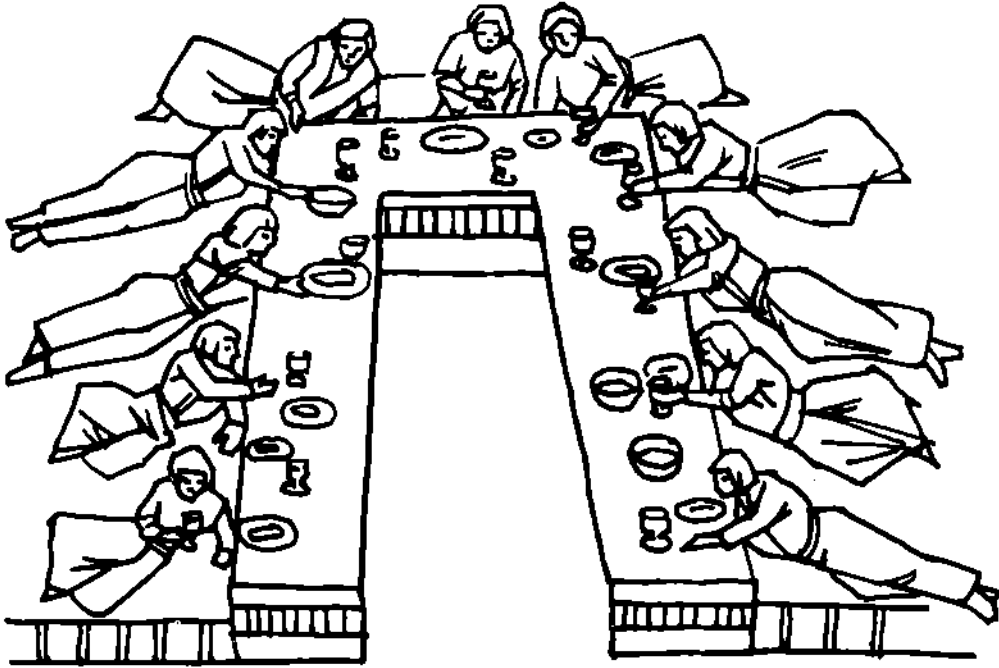
¹⁸And Jesus replied, "Go to our friend in the city, and say to him, 'Our teacher sends you this message - "My time is almost here. My followers and I are going to eat the Passover supper at your house".' "*⁺

¹⁹And so His followers did what Jesus had told them to do and got the Passover supper ready.

Jesus Talks about His Betrayal

²⁰Towards the end of the afternoon Jesus took His

place at the table* with the twelve apostles. ²¹And while they were eating, Jesus said to them, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that one of you is going to hand me over to my enemies."



AN ANCIENT DINNER

²²Of course this made them feel very sad, and one by one they began to ask Him, "Surely Lord, I'm not the one, am I?"

²³And Jesus answered, "The man who is dipping his food into the dish* with me is the one who will hand me over. ²⁴The Son of Man is going to die just as the Bible says He will, but how terrible it will be for that man who hands the Son of Man over to His enemies! It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

²⁵Then Judas, the man who was betraying Jesus, said to Him, "Surely Rabbi, I'm not the one, am I?"

And Jesus whispered to him, "You certainly are."

They Eat the First Lord's Supper

Friday*

²⁶And while they were eating, Jesus took a little round loaf of bread* and asked God to bless it. Then He broke it into pieces and gave them to His followers, and said to them, "Take it and eat. This is my body."*

27 Later He took a cup and said a prayer of thanksgiving and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** You see, this is my blood of the agreement,* which is being poured out for many people to take away their sins. **29** And I'm telling you that from now on I will never again take a drink of this wine until that Day* when I drink it with you in a new way in my Father's Kingdom." **30** Then they sang a hymn and left the house to go to Mount Olive.*

Jesus Warns Peter That He Will Deny Him

31 While they were walking along, Jesus said to them, "Tonight you will all stumble and lose your faith because of me. You see, the Bible says,

'I will kill the shepherd,

and his flock of sheep will be scattered'.⁺

32 But after I have been raised back to life, I will go back to Galilee ahead of you."

33 Peter answered, "It may be true that they will lose their faith because of you, but I will never lose my faith."

34 And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that this very night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't want anything to do with me."

35 Then Peter said, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never say that I don't want anything to do with You." And all the other apostles said the same thing.

Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

36 Then Jesus and His followers came to a place called Gethsemane,* and He said to them, "You sit here, while I go over there and pray."

37 Then He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons* along with Him and began to feel very sad and worried. **38** He said to them, "My heart is so full of sorrow that it's almost killing me. Stay right here, and stay awake with me."

39 Then He went a little farther and threw himself

face down on the ground as He prayed. "Oh my Father," He said, "since it is possible, take this cup* away from me! However don't do what I want, but what You want."

40 And then He went back to His three followers, but He found them sleeping. So He said to Peter, "Didn't you have the strength to stay awake with me for one hour?" **41** You must stay awake, and keep praying that you won't have to be tested. Your spirit is willing, but your sinful body* is weak."

42 Then He went away and prayed a second time, saying, "Oh my Father, since it isn't possible for me to get rid of this cup without drinking it, what You want must be done." **43** But when He came back again, He found them sleeping. You see, they were so sleepy that they couldn't keep their eyes open.

44 So He left them again and went away and prayed the third time, saying the same prayer as before. **45** And when He came back to His followers, He said to them, "Are you going to go on sleeping and resting all night? Listen to me! The time has come, and the Son of Man* is being handed over into the hands of sinful men!" **46** Get up! We have to go! Look! The man who is handing me over is here!"

Jesus is Arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane

47 Jesus was still talking, when suddenly Judas, one of the twelve apostles, appeared with a big crowd of men. They had been sent by the head priests* and the members of the Council,* and they were carrying swords and clubs.

48 Earlier the traitor had given the others a signal. "The man I kiss is your man. Grab him!" **49** So right away Judas went up to Jesus and said, "Good evening, Rabbi," and kissed Him several times.

50 "My friend," said Jesus, "That's why you're here." And then some of the men came up to Jesus and grabbed Him and held Him tight.

51 But now an exciting thing happened. One of the

men who were with Jesus pulled out his sword and took a swing at the Head Priest's slave, and cut off his ear.

52But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place. You see, all those who use the sword will die by the sword. **53**Don't you think I could ask my Father for help? And if I did, He would have more than twelve regiments of angels* standing here at my side right now. **54**But then how could the things which God has said in the Bible come true? For the Bible says that this is what must happen."

55Then Jesus said to the crowd, "Did you have to come out here with swords and clubs to capture me as though I was trying to start a revolution? Every day I sat in the Temple-yard* explaining the Bible to the people, and you never arrested me. **56**But this whole thing has happened so that what the prophets wrote in the Bible would come true".* Then all of His followers left Him and ran away.

Jesus' "Trial" at Caiaphas' House

57Now the men arrested Jesus and led Him away to the house of Caiaphas, the Head Priest,* where the scribes* and members of the Council had gathered together. **58**And Peter followed Him, staying a long ways behind, until they went into the yard around the house. And Peter also went into the yard and sat down with the servants to see how it would all end.

59At this time the head priests and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to find some false evidence against Jesus, so that they could have Him killed. **60**But they couldn't find any, even though many witnesses came forward and accused Him of doing things which He hadn't done. But finally two men* came forward **61**and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to tear down God's Temple and rebuild it in three days'".*

62Then the Head Priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Aren't you going to give any answer? What about

the charges these men are bringing against you?"

63 But Jesus didn't say a word.

Jesus' Trial before the Sanhedrin

Later the Head Priest said to Jesus, "I'm ordering you to take an oath before the living God, and tell us if you really are the Messiah,* God's Son."

64 And Jesus answered, "I certainly am.* And I'm also telling you that

from now on you will see 'the Son of Man
sitting beside the Almighty at His right hand',⁺
and 'coming on the clouds of heaven'.⁺

65 Then the Head Priest tore his clothes and said, "He has insulted God! Why do we have to have any more witnesses? Look! Just now you have all heard how He insulted God. **66** What do you think?"

And they answered, "He must die!"* **67** Then they spit in His face and beat Him with their fists. And some of them slapped Him in the face **68** and said, "Speak to us like a prophet, Messiah. Who is it who hit you?"

Peter Denies Jesus

69 While this was going on, Peter was sitting outside in the yard. And one of the servant girls came up to him and said, "You're one of those who were with Jesus of Galilee!"

70 Peter however denied it in front of them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. **71** Then he left the group and went over by the gate.

But there another girl saw him and said to the men who were there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 And again Peter denied it. He swore an oath* and said, "I don't know the man!"

73 But a little later the men who were standing there came up to Peter and said, "Sure enough! You're also one of His followers. After all, everyone can tell

21 So when the governor turned to the crowd again, he asked them, "Which one of the two do you want me to set free for you?"

And they answered, "Barabbas."

22 "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

And they all answered, "Put him on a cross!"

23 "But what has he done that's wrong?" said Pilate.

But they just yelled all the louder, "Put him on a cross!"

24 Now Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere. And what was worse, he saw that a riot was starting. So he took some water and washed his hands right in front of the whole crowd. And as he did so, he said, "This man's blood isn't going to be on my hands! You will have to take the blame."

25 And all the people answered, "His blood will be on us, and on our children!"

26 So Pilate set Barabbas free for them. Then he had Jesus whipped, and handed Him over to his soldiers to be put on a cross.

The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

27 The governor's soldiers then took Jesus into the yard around the governor's palace, which was called the "Praetorium,"* and gathered their whole regiment around Him. **28** First they took off all His clothes and put a short red soldier's cloak on Him. **29** Then they twisted some thorn branches together into a crown and put it on His head, and put a stick in His right hand. After that they got down on their knees in front of Jesus* and made fun of Him by saying, "Good morning, King of the Jews!" **30** Then each one spit in His face and took the stick and beat Him on the head with it. **31** And when they finished making fun of Him, they took off the soldier's cloak and put His own clothes back on Him, and led Him away to put Him on the cross.

Jesus is Put to Death

32On their way out of the city they met a man from Cyrene whose name was Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.* **33**And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means "the Skull", **34**they "offered Jesus a drink of wine with some bitter drugs mixed in it",⁺ but when He tasted it, He wouldn't drink it. **35**Then the soldiers put Jesus on the cross, and

"divided up His clothes among themselves by shaking the lot".*⁺



SHAKING THE LOT

36And after that, they sat there and guarded Him.

37They also put a sign over His head, giving the reason why He was being killed. It read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." **38**And they put two robbers on crosses at the same time, one at His right, and the other at His left.

39All day long the people who were passing by "shook their heads"⁺ at Jesus and said all kinds of nasty and insulting things to Him, like **40**"You're the one who is going to tear down the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Now save yourself!" Or, "Since you are God's Son, come down from the cross!"

41The head priests were also making fun of Him in the same way, along with the scribes* and the members of the Council. **42**One of them said, "He saved other people, but he isn't able to save himself."

Another one said, "He's the King of Israel. If he will come down from the cross right now, we'll believe in him."

43And another said, " 'He's trusting in God,' Well, 'God had better rescue him right now if He wants him'.⁺

After all, he said, 'I'm God's Son'."

44Even the robbers who had been crucified with Him said the same kind of nasty things to Him.

45Then at twelve o'clock noon it suddenly got dark all over the whole land, and it stayed dark until three o'clock in the afternoon, **46**when Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Eh-lee, Eh-lee, lemá sabachtánee," which means, "My God! My God! Why have you left me all alone?"⁺

47When the people who were standing there heard this, some of them said, "This fellow is calling Elijah."

48And right away one of them ran off and got a sponge and filled it with "sour wine." Then he put it on the end of a stick and started to "give Jesus a drink".⁺

49But the rest of them said, "Wait! Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

50And a little later Jesus gave another loud yell, and gave up His spirit. **51**And then some strange things happened. The curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And there was an earthquake, and great rocks were split open, **52**and the caves where they buried the dead were opened, and the bodies of many of God's people* who were sleeping were raised back to Life **53**and came out of their graves. And after Jesus was raised back to Life they went into the holy city, where lots of people saw them.

54When the Roman army captain and the soldiers who were with him guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and the other things that happened, they were terribly frightened, and they said, "This man really was God's Son!"

55There were also a lot of women there watching from a distance. These were the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, taking care of Him.*

56Among them were Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

57a Later on, towards the end of the afternoon, a man by the name of Joseph **58** went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate ordered his guards to give it to him. **57b** Joseph was a rich man from Arimathea, who had become one of Jesus' followers. **59** So he took the body and wrapped it up in a clean linen sheet **60** and put it in his own new grave, which was a cave that he had carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a big stone in front of the mouth of the cave and left. **61** And while he was doing this, Mary from Magdala and the other Mary were sitting there across from the grave.

A Guard is Placed at the Cave

62 That evening, which was now Saturday, the day after "Preparation Day,"* the head priests* and the Pharisees* gathered together and went to see Pilate. **63** "Your Majesty," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that liar said, 'After three days I will come back to life.' **64** Therefore will you please give orders to have the grave tightly guarded until the third day. We don't want his followers to come and steal his body, and tell the people, 'He's been raised from the dead.' That last lie will be worse than the first one."

65 And Pilate replied, "You can have a squad of my soldiers. Go and guard it as tightly as you know how."

66 So they went to the grave and put a seal on the stone, and left the soldiers there to keep a close watch.

Jesus Comes Back to Life Again

Sunday

28 After the day of rest had ended, and while it was just beginning to get light on Sunday morning, Mary from Magdala and the other Mary went out to take a look at the grave. **2** And then an unusual thing happened. There was a great earthquake, because one of the Lord's angels came down out of heaven. He went to the cave and rolled the stone away and sat on top of it. **3** As he sat there, he looked like lightning,

and his clothes were as white as snow. ⁴And the guards were so afraid of him that they started to shake, and fell to the ground like they were dead.

⁵Then the angel said to the women, "You mustn't be afraid. You see, I know that you're looking for Jesus, who was killed on the cross. ⁶He can't be here, because He has been raised back to Life, just as He said. Come here, and take a look at the place where He was lying. ⁷Then go as fast as you can and tell His followers that He has been raised from the dead. And remember that He is going back to Galilee ahead of you, and you're going to see Him there. Now remember what I've told you!"

⁸So the women left the cave as fast as they could. They were frightened, but they were also terribly happy as they ran to bring the news to Jesus' followers. ⁹And then a wonderful thing happened. Jesus came to meet them. "Good morning!" He said.

And the two women went up to Him and fell on their knees in front of Him, with their foreheads on the ground* and grabbed hold of his feet. ¹⁰And then Jesus said to them, "You mustn't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go back to Galilee, and they will see me there."

The Jewish Leaders Invent Their Own Story

¹¹But while the women were on their way, some of the soldiers who had been guarding the grave went back to the city and told the head priests everything that had happened. ¹²So the head priests had a meeting with the members of the Council, and worked out a plan. They gave the soldiers plenty of money and told them, ¹³"This is what you must say - 'Sometime during the night, while we were sleeping, his followers came and stole his body.' ¹⁴And if the governor hears about this, we'll take care of him, and fix things so that you won't have anything to worry about."

¹⁵So the soldiers took the money and did what they were told. And this is the story that has been repeated

everywhere among the Jews right up till this present day.*

Jesus Gives His Followers Their Final Orders

16Later the eleven apostles went to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. **17**And when they saw Him, they fell on their knees in front of Him, with their foreheads on the ground. Some of them however weren't sure about all this.

18So Jesus went to them and talked to them. "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth," He said. **19**"Therefore you must go to the people of all the nations* and make them my followers by baptizing them into the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,* **20**and teaching them to follow all the orders I have given you. And remember this. I will always be with you every day until this world comes to an end!"*

THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO MARK*

(Written in Rome, about 65 A.D.)

John the Baptist Begins His Work

Spring, 26

1 This is the Good News about Jesus the promised Savior,* who is God's Son. **2** And it begins just as God said it would in the book of Isaiah the prophet -

"Now hear this! I'm sending out My messenger ahead of You.

He will get Your highway ready for You".⁺

3 "Someone's voice is calling out in the desert,
'Get the Lord's highway ready!
Make His roads straight!'"⁺

4 So one day John appeared in the desert,* and began baptizing and spreading the news that the people must change their minds and their way of living and be baptized, so that God would take away their sins. **5** And people from all over the district of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to hear him. And as they confessed their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan river.

6 John was dressed in clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and he ate locusts* and wild honey. **7** And he kept on spreading the news, saying, "A man who is much more powerful than I is following me. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie the strap of His sandals.* **8** I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus is Baptized and Tested

9 At that same time Jesus came from Nazareth, which is in the district of Galilee, and John baptized Him in the Jordan river. **10** And just as Jesus was

*Helpful notes for Mark begin on page 753

⁺Verses quoted in Mark begin on page 875

stepping up out of the water, He saw the heavens splitting open, and the Spirit coming down on Him, like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came out of the sky. "You are My Son," it said, "My own dear Son. You have made Me very, very happy."

¹²And right away the Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, ¹³where He stayed for forty days while He was being tested by Satan. He lived among the wild animals, but the angels were always taking care of Him.

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee

¹⁴Then after John had been arrested,* Jesus went back to Galilee, spreading God's message of Good News. ¹⁵"The time has come," He said, "and God's Kingdom is here! You must change your minds and your way of living, and believe this Good News."

Jesus Calls His First Four Followers

¹⁶One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing their net* into the water. You see, they were fishermen.

¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Come and live with me as my students, and I will make you fishers of men." ¹⁸And right away they left their nets and followed Him, and began to live with Him as their teacher.*

¹⁹After Jesus had walked a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in their boat, fixing their nets. ²⁰And as soon as Jesus called



USING A THROW NET

them, they left their father in the boat with the hired men, and followed Him.

Jesus Heals a Man with an Evil Spirit

21Then the four of them went with Jesus into Capernaum. And on the first Saturday* Jesus went to the meeting house* and began to explain the Bible* to the people. **22**But the people were completely amazed at the way He taught the Bible, because He explained it like a man who knows what he's talking about, not like the scribes.*

23Then suddenly a man who had an unclean spirit walked into the meeting house and yelled, **24**"What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are. You're God's chosen Servant".*

25But Jesus told the demon to behave himself. "Shut your mouth!" He said. "And come out of him!"

26Then the evil spirit yelled as loud as he could, and threw the man down on the floor where he rolled around, foaming at the mouth.* But then the demon went out of him.

27Everyone there was so astonished that they all began to talk to each other at the same time. "What is this?" some of them asked.

And someone answered, "This is a new way of explaining the Bible with authority."

And some others said, "He even gives orders to the evil spirits, and they do what He says."

28And so the news about Jesus quickly spread everywhere, all over Galilee.

Jesus Heals a Lot of People in Capernaum

29As soon as Jesus left the meeting house, He and James and John went with Simon and Andrew to their house, **30**where Simon's wife's mother was lying in bed with a fever. So they told Jesus about her as soon as He came in.

31And Jesus went over to the bed and took hold

of her hand and helped her up. And the fever left her, and she started to get dinner for them.

32 Later on, towards the end of the afternoon, when the sun had nearly set, they were bringing all their sick people to Jesus, and all the people who had demons inside of them. **33** In fact, the whole city was gathered there in front of the house. **34** So Jesus healed many sick people who had all kinds of diseases, and He drove out a lot of demons. But He wouldn't let the demons speak, because they knew who He was.

Jesus Travels all over Galilee

35 Very early the next morning, long before the sun was up, Jesus got up and left the city. He went out to a place where there were no people living, and spent some time there praying.

36 Later Simon and his friends started to look for Him. **37** And when they found Him, they said, "Everyone is looking for You."

38 Jesus answered, "We must go somewhere else, to the other towns around here, so that I can spread the news there also. After all, this is what I came to do." **39** So He travelled all over Galilee, spreading the news in their meeting houses, and driving out demons.

Jesus Heals a Leper

40 One day a leper came to Jesus, asking Him for help. "If You want to," he said, "You can make me clean".*

41 Jesus felt sorry for the man and reached out His hand and touched him.* And as He did so, He said, "I do want to. Be clean!" **42** And right away the man's leprosy was gone and he was clean.

43 Then Jesus' voice sounded stern and angry as He quickly sent the man away. **44** "See to it that you don't say anything to anyone!" Jesus said. "But go and let the priest examine you.* And bring the sacrifices which Moses ordered for those who have been made

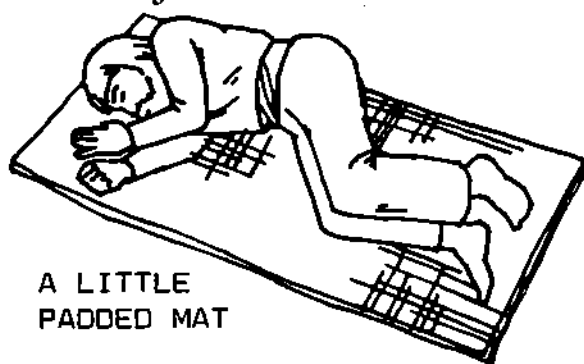
clean,* to show the people that you have been healed."

⁴⁵But the man went out and began to spread the news all over, telling the story of what Jesus had done. So from then on Jesus couldn't let himself be seen going into any town. Instead, He stayed outside the towns in the areas where there were no people living. But people kept on coming to Him from everywhere.

Jesus Heals a Man Who was Paralyzed

²Then Jesus came back to Capernaum again, and in just a few days' time everyone heard that He was home. ²And soon there were so many people gathered at His house that there was no more room inside the house, or outside in the street in front of the house. Inside Jesus was talking to the people.

³While He was talking, four men came to see Jesus, carrying a man who was paralyzed. ⁴But they weren't able to bring him in to Jesus because of the crowd. So they took off some of the tiles from the roof right over Jesus' head. And when they had made a hole through the roof, they lowered the little padded mat* on which the paralyzed man was lying down through the hole.



A LITTLE
PADDED MAT

⁵When Jesus saw how much faith they had, He said to the man who was paralyzed, "Young man, your sins are forgiven."

⁶There were some scribes* sitting there; and they were thinking to themselves, ⁷"Why is this fellow talking like this? He's insulting God. Is there anyone but God who can forgive sins?"

⁸Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking, and so He asked them, "Why do you have thoughts like this in your hearts? ⁹Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your little mat and walk'? ¹⁰But now I'll prove to you that the Son of Man* has the

authority to forgive sins here on earth." Then He turned to the paralyzed man, and said, ¹¹"I'm telling you to get up! Then pick up your little mat and go on home."

¹²And right away the man got up, and picked up his mat and walked out of the house, right in front of everybody. Everyone there was completely amazed, and they began to praise God. "We have never seen anything like this," they said.

Jesus Calls Levi to be His Follower

¹³Then Jesus left the house to go down to the lake shore again, and the whole crowd of people went with Him, and Jesus continued to explain the Bible* to them. ¹⁴He was walking along the street when He saw Levi,*the son of Alphaeus, sitting at his tax collector's* table. "Come and live with me as one of my students!" said Jesus. And Levi jumped to his feet and followed Him.

¹⁵Later, while Jesus was having dinner* at Levi's house, there were a lot of tax collectors and other people who had lived sinful lives eating at the same table with Jesus and His followers. You see, there were many people like this in those days who were now Jesus' followers.

¹⁶There were also some scribes there who were Pharisees;* and when they saw that Jesus was eating with people whose lives were so sinful, and with tax collectors, they said to His followers, "Why is he eating with tax collectors and people whose lives are so sinful?"

¹⁷When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "The ones who need a doctor are the sick people, not those who are well and strong. I haven't come to call people who are perfectly holy to be my followers. I have come to call sinners."

Jesus Talks about Going without Food

¹⁸At that time John's followers and the Pharisees were going without food.* So some of them came

to Jesus and asked Him, "Why is it that John's followers and the followers of the Pharisees are going without food, but your followers don't do this?"

19Jesus answered, "The wedding guests can't go without food, can they, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can't go without food. **20**But the time will come when the bridegroom will have to leave them, and then they will go without food.

21"No one makes a patch out of a piece of cloth that hasn't been shrunk, and sews it on an old cloak. If he does, the strong cloth of the patch will shrink and tear away some of the cloth from the old cloak, and the hole becomes even bigger.

22"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.* If he does, the wine will break the skins open, and then both the wine and the skins are ruined. Instead, new wine is put into new wineskins."

The Question of Working on Saturday

23And once Jesus was walking through a field of grain on Saturday.* And His followers began to make a path through the field by picking off the heads of grain.

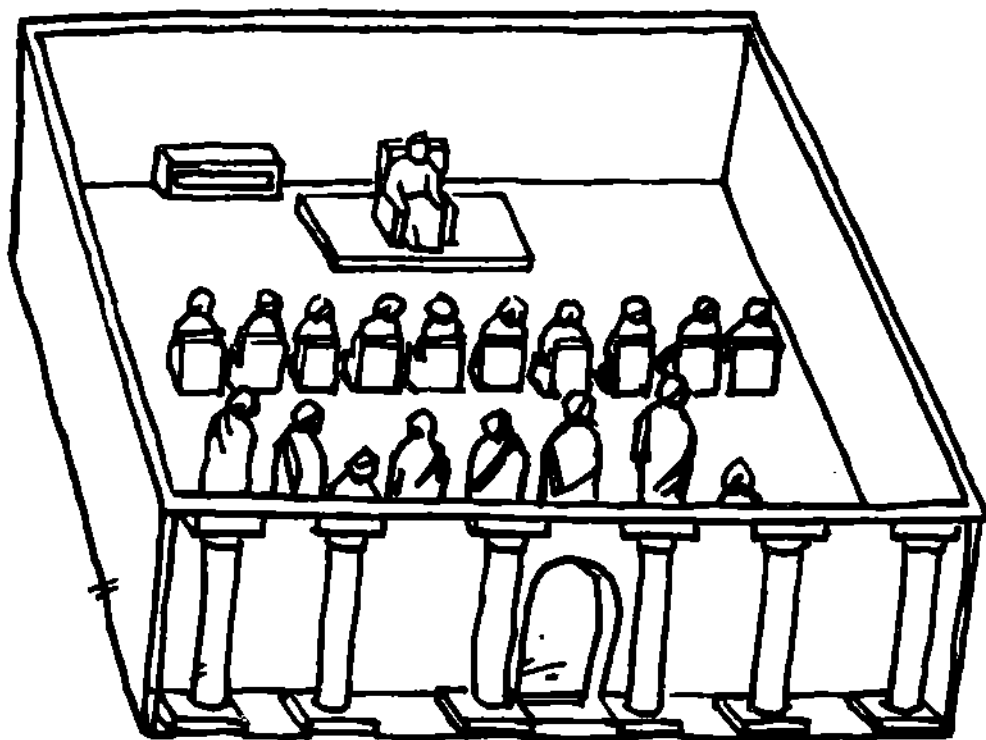
24But the Pharisees* said to Jesus, "Look! Why are they doing something which is against the Law on Saturday?"

25Jesus answered, "Haven't you ever read about what David did when he and his men were hungry and needed food? **26**How he went into God's house and ate some of the bread which was set out for God, and gave some to the men who were with him?* It was against the Law for him to eat that bread. Only the priests are allowed to eat it."

27Then Jesus said, "God created the day of rest because we human beings need it; but He didn't create us because the day of rest needs us. **28**And that means that the Son of Man also has full authority over the day of rest."

Jesus Heals a Man on Saturday

3 Then Jesus went back to the meeting house,* where there was a man who had a hand that was all dried up and dead. 2There were also some men who were



A MEETING HOUSE

watching Jesus carefully to see if He would heal the man on Saturday, so that they could accuse Him of breaking the Law.

3So Jesus said to the man who had the crippled hand, "Get up and come over here in the middle of the room!"

4Then He said to the people, "Does the Law allow us to do good things or bad things on Saturday? Does it allow us to save life or kill on Saturday?"

But no one said a word. 5Then Jesus looked at each one all around the room, His eyes blazing with anger. And as He looked at them, His heart was filled with a terrible sadness as He saw how hard their hearts were. Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" And when the man did so, his hand became perfectly well.

6Then the Pharisees* left the meeting house. And right away they met with Herod's followers and began

working out a plan to kill Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Lot of People

⁷Then Jesus left the meeting house and went down to the lake with His followers, and a big crowd of people from Galilee followed Him. And soon another big crowd arrived from Judea ⁸and Jerusalem and Idumea, and from the other side of the Jordan river, and from the area around Tyre and Sidon.* You see, the people in all these places kept on hearing about the things Jesus was doing, and so they went to see Him. ⁹Therefore Jesus told His followers to have a little boat ready for Him, so that the people wouldn't crush Him. ¹⁰You see, He had healed a lot of people that day, and so all the sick people were crowding around Him, trying to touch Him.

¹¹And whenever the evil spirits saw Jesus, they would fall down in front of Him and yell, "You really are God's Son!" ¹²But Jesus kept on giving them strict orders that they mustn't tell anyone who He was.

Jesus Chooses Twelve Apostles

¹³Then Jesus went up into the hills, and sent word to some of His followers that He wanted to talk to them. So they went out to see Him, ¹⁴and He picked out twelve of them to stay with Him all the time,* so that He could send them out* later to spread the news, ¹⁵and give them authority to drive out demons.

¹⁶The twelve He chose were Simon, whom He called Peter, ¹⁷and James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. Jesus called these two men "Boanerges", which means "the sons of thunder". ¹⁸Then He chose Andrew, Philip and Bartholomew,* Matthew, Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus,* Simon the patriot, ¹⁹and Judas from Kerioth, who handed Jesus over to His enemies.

Jesus is Accused of Working for the Devil

²⁰Then Jesus started out for home, and again a crowd of people went along with Him. There were

so many people that Jesus and His followers weren't even able to eat. ²¹But when His family heard about what was happening, they said, "He's acting like a crazy man." And they went to rescue Him.

²²In the crowd there were also some scribes* who had come down from Jerusalem, and they were saying, "He has Beelzebul* inside of him. And therefore it's the ruler of the demons who is giving him the power to drive out demons."

²³Then Jesus told the scribes to gather around Him, and He began to talk to them, using stories and illustrations. "How can Satan be driving out Satan?" He asked. ²⁴"If a kingdom is divided into opposing groups, that kingdom can't last. ²⁵And if a family is divided into opposing groups, that family will never last. ²⁶So if it's true that Satan is fighting against himself, his kingdom is divided and it can't last. It's finished. ²⁷But no one can get into a strong man's house and carry off his belongings unless he first ties up that strong man. Then he can carry off everything in the house.

²⁸"I'm telling you the truth when I say that people will be forgiven all their sins, and all the nasty and insulting things they say. ²⁹But anyone who says insulting things about the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. He's guilty of an eternal sin." ³⁰He said this because people were saying that there was an evil spirit inside of Jesus.

What Jesus had to Say about His Family

³¹Just then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They were standing outside the house and sent Jesus a message, asking Him to come out.

³²At this time the crowd was sitting all around Jesus, and so they said to Him, "Look! Your mother and Your brothers are outside. They're looking for You."

³³Jesus answered, "Who is my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴Then He looked all around at the people who were sitting there around Him and said, "Look!

Here is my mother and my brothers. ³⁵Whoever does what God wants is my brother and sister and mother."

Jesus' Story about the Farmer

⁴ Later Jesus went down to the lake shore again, and began to explain the Bible* to the people. And again such a large crowd of people gathered around Him that Jesus got into a boat and sat out on the lake, while all the people stood along the shore, facing the lake. ²Then He explained to them a lot of things in the Bible by telling stories, and this is one of the stories He told.

³"Listen and pay attention!" He said. "A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴And as he was throwing the seed around, some of it fell along the edge of the road, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Some other seeds fell on those places where there was only a thin layer of soil over the rock, and it sprouted up right away, because the layer of soil was so thin. ⁶But when the sun came up, it was too hot for the young plants, and they dried up, because they had no roots. ⁷Some other seeds fell where there were thorn bushes, and the thorns came up and choked the plants, so that they never produced any crop. ⁸And some other seeds fell on the good soil, where they sprouted and grew and brought forth a crop. One plant had thirty kernels, another had sixty kernels, and another had a hundred kernels." ⁹And then Jesus added, "Now think about what you have just heard!"

Jesus Explains Why He Used Stories

¹⁰Later, when they were alone, the twelve apostles and some of His other followers asked Jesus about these stories.

¹¹Jesus answered, "I have told you people the secret of God's Kingdom. But those people who are on the outside get everything in stories. ¹²But the result is that

'they strain their eyes to see,
but they don't learn anything;

and they strain their ears to hear,
but they don't understand anything,
because they don't want to turn to God
and be forgiven'."†

Jesus Explains the Story of the Farmer

13Then Jesus asked them, "You don't know what this story means? Then how will you know what all the other stories mean?"

14"The farmer is sowing the Word. **15**And there are some people who are like the seeds which fell along the edge of the road. Just as soon as they hear the Word, Satan comes along and takes away the Word which fell into their hearts. **16**And there are some people who are like the seeds which fell on those places where there is only a thin layer of soil over the rock. When they hear the Word, they receive it right away with great joy. **17**But the Word doesn't take any root in their hearts, and it doesn't last very long. Soon some trouble or suffering comes along because of the Word, and right away they lose their faith. **18**And there are other people who are like the seeds which fell in the thorn bushes. These people hear the Word, **19**but then the worries of life, and the false ideas that money brings, and the desires for other things get into their hearts and choke the life out of the Word, so that it doesn't bear any fruit. **20**And then there are those people who are like the seeds which fell on the good soil. These are the kind of people who hear the Word and believe it and bear fruit. One person produces thirty for one, another sixty for one, and another a hundred for one".*

The Purpose of a Lamp

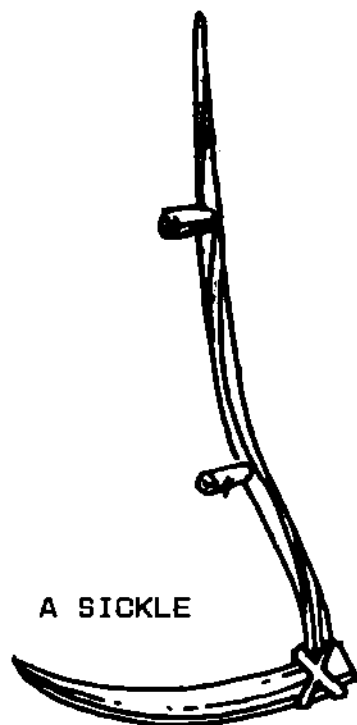
21He also said, "No one brings in a lamp* and puts it under a basket, or under the bed, does he? Doesn't he put it on the lampstand? **22**The truth is that there is nothing hidden which won't be brought out into the open, and there isn't anything covered up which won't come out into plain sight. **23**Now think about what

you have just heard!"

24And then He said to them, "Pay attention to what you are hearing! The measure you use in measuring out to other people is the same measure others will use in measuring out to you. And they will give you even more. **25**Because 'if a person has something, he will get more; but if one has nothing, he will even lose what he has'."*

Jesus' Story about How the Seed Grows

26He also told them this story. "God's Kingdom is like a man who throws some seed on the ground. **27**Then as the days go by, he sleeps at night and gets up during the day and the seed sprouts and grows, but he doesn't know how this happens. **28**The earth automatically makes the seed bear fruit. First comes the green shoot, then the head, and then all the kernels in the head. **29**And as soon as the crop is ready, the farmer sends out the man with the sickle, because it's time to cut the grain."



Jesus' Story about the Mustard Seed

30He also told this story. "What shall we say God's Kingdom is like? What kind of words can we use to describe it? **31**It's like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all the seeds in the world when you plant it in the ground. **32**But after it's planted, it grows and becomes the biggest of all the plants. It has such large branches that the birds can build their nests in its shade.

33Jesus told a lot of stories like this as He talked to the people about God's message, telling them as much as they could understand. **34**But He never talked

to the people without using a story. And when He was alone with His followers, He always explained everything to them.

Jesus Calms a Storm

35 Later that day, towards the end of the afternoon, Jesus said to His followers, "Let's go across to the other side of the lake." **36** So they sent the crowd away and took Him along with them in the boat. There were also some other boats that went along with Him.

37 But soon there was a terrible windstorm, and the waves were coming up into the boat, so that the boat was almost filled with water. **38** Jesus however was sleeping in the back of the boat, with His head on a pillow. So His followers woke Him up. "Teacher!" they shouted. "Don't You care that we're drowning?"

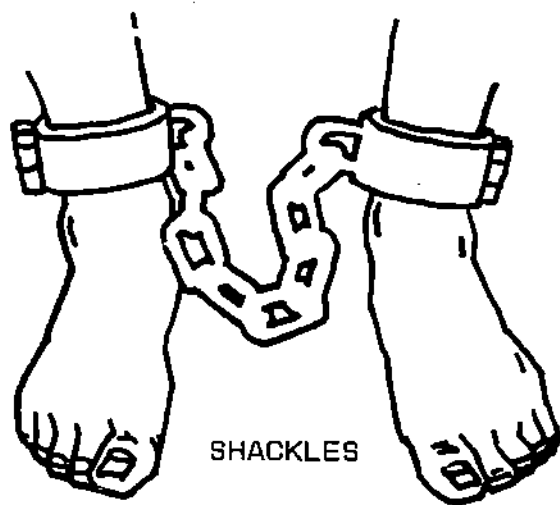
39 Then Jesus got up and told the wind to quiet down, and the lake to be still. And the wind died down, and everything became perfectly quiet and still.

40 Then He said to His followers, "Why are you so afraid? After all this time don't you have any faith?"

41 But they were terribly frightened. "Who in the world is this?" they said to each other. "Even the wind and the waves do what He says."

Jesus Heals a Demon-possessed Man

5 When they got to the other side of the lake, they were in the area around Gergesa.* **2** And as soon



as Jesus stepped out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came up to Him. He had come out of some caves where they buried the dead. **3** And he was living there in those caves, because the people weren't able to keep him tied up any longer, not even with a chain. **4** You see, they

had tied him up many times with shackles; and no

one was strong enough to keep him under control. ⁵And so he stayed there in the caves and in the hills all the time, day and night, yelling and cutting himself on the stones.

⁶The man had seen Jesus when He was still a long ways from shore, and he had run to meet Him. So he ran up to Jesus and fell down on his knees in front of Him, with his forehead on the ground,* ⁷and yelled at the top of his voice, "Jesus! You're the Son of the one true God. Why are You coming to see me? Take an oath* before God and promise that You won't torture me." ⁸He said this because Jesus was just starting to talk to him, and had ordered the evil spirit to come out of the man.

⁹Then Jesus asked the demon, "What's your name?"

And he answered, "My name is 'Legion',* because there are so many of us." ¹⁰Then they begged Jesus many times not to send them away out of the country.

¹¹At that time there was a large herd of pigs feeding there at the foot of the hill. ¹²So the demons begged Jesus, "Send us to that herd of pigs, so that we can go into them."

¹³And when Jesus said they could go, the evil spirits went out of the man and into the pigs. And then the whole herd ran wildly over the edge of the cliff and down into the lake. There were about two thousand of them, and they all drowned in the lake.

¹⁴Then the men who were taking care of the pigs ran off and spread the news in the city and the surrounding farms; and the people came out to see what had happened.* ¹⁵And when they came up to Jesus, they saw the man who had been filled with the legion of demons sitting there all dressed and in his right mind, and this frightened them.

¹⁶Then the men who had seen all this told the others just what had happened to the man who had been filled with the demons, and also about the pigs.

¹⁷So then the people began to beg Jesus to leave

their country.

18 Jesus was just stepping into the boat when the man who had been filled with demons begged Jesus to let him go with Him; **19** but Jesus wouldn't let him. "Go back home to your family," said Jesus, "and tell them about all the things the Lord has done for you, and how He took pity on you."

20 So the man left and began to spread the news in the district of Decapolis, telling about all the things Jesus had done for him. And all the people were astonished.

A Bleeding Woman and a Dead Girl

21 When Jesus had crossed over the lake again to the other side, a great crowd of people gathered around Him. And He was standing there on the shore **22** when the president of one of the meeting houses came up to Him. His name was Jairus, and as soon as he saw Jesus, he fell down on the ground at His feet **23** and began to beg hard for Jesus' help. "My little girl is so sick that she can't last much longer," he said. "Please come and put Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live."

24 So Jesus started off with him, and a great crowd of people followed Him, pressing in on Him on every side.

25 In this crowd there was a woman who had been bleeding inside for twelve years. **26** She had tried all kinds of treatments from many doctors, and had spent all the money she had, but nothing had done her any good. Instead, she had kept on getting worse. **27** But when this woman heard about Jesus, she followed along in the crowd, and came up behind Him and touched His long outer cloak.* **28** You see, she was thinking, "If I can just touch His clothes, I'll get well." **29** And as soon as she did, her bleeding stopped, and she could tell from how she felt inside that she had been healed from this sickness that had caused her so much pain.

30And right away Jesus also knew from the feeling He had in His body that some power was going out of Him. So He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

31His followers said to Him, "You see this crowd of people pressing in on You from every side, and then You ask, 'Who touched me'?"

32But Jesus kept on looking around to see the one who had done this.

33By now the woman was so frightened that she was trembling. But since she knew what had happened to her, she came and fell down in front of Jesus and told Him the whole story.

34Then Jesus said to her, "Young lady, your faith has made you well. You can go, knowing that you have nothing to be afraid of or worry about.* And you must be healed from this painful illness."

35Jesus was still talking to her when some men came from the president's house and said to Jairus, "Your daughter has died. Why bother the Teacher any longer?"

36But Jesus heard what the men were saying, and so He said to Jairus, "You mustn't be afraid. The one thing you must do is keep on believing!"

37After that Jesus didn't let anyone go along with Him except Peter, James and John, who was James' brother.

38When they got to the president's house, Jesus saw the noisy crowd and heard all the people crying and wailing. **39**So He went into the house and said to the people there, "Why are you making all this noise? Why are you crying and wailing? The child hasn't died. She's sleeping".*

40Then the people began to laugh at Him, but He made them all get out of the house. And then He took the child's father and mother and the men who had come with Him, and went into the room where the child was lying. **41**Then He took hold of her hand

and said, "Talitha coóm!" which means, "Little girl, I'm talking to you. Get up!" ⁴²And right away the little girl got up and began to walk around. You see, she was twelve years old.

The people who were there were so amazed that they could hardly believe their eyes, ⁴³but Jesus gave them strict orders not to let anyone know about this. He also told them to give the girl something to eat.

The People of Nazareth Reject Jesus

⁶ Jesus then left Capernaum and went to His old home town, and His followers went along with Him. ²And on the first Saturday, He began to explain the Bible* to the people in their meeting house.* There were lots of people there, and as they listened to Him they were so amazed that they didn't know what to think. "Where did this fellow get all this?" some of them asked.

Others said. "What is this wisdom this fellow has found? And what kind of miracles are these that he's doing?"

³And some were saying, "Isn't this fellow the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters living here with us?" So they didn't believe that He was the promised Savior.*

⁴Then Jesus said to them, "The only place a prophet is not honored and respected is in his own home town and among his own relatives and family." ⁵And besides putting His hands on a few sick people and making them well, He wasn't able to do any other miracle there. ⁶And He was astonished at their unbelief.

Jesus Sends Out His Twelve Apostles

After this Jesus travelled around through the villages around Nazareth, explaining the Bible to the people.

⁷One day He called the twelve apostles* together and began to send them out, two by two. But first, He gave them authority over the evil spirits. ⁸Then

He gave them orders not to take anything along for their trip except a walking stick. "Don't take any food or travelling bag or money in your belts," He said. ⁹"Wear your sandals, but don't take an extra shirt.

¹⁰"Whenever you go into a house to stay as a guest, stay right there until you leave that town. ¹¹And when you come to a place where the people don't give you a friendly welcome, or listen to what you have to say, leave that town. And as you're leaving, shake their dust off your feet as a warning to them".*

¹²So they went out and spread the news that people must change their minds and their way of living. ¹³They also drove out many demons, and poured oil on many sick people and made them well.

How John the Baptist was Killed

¹⁴Soon King Herod* heard about this, because everyone was talking about Jesus. Some of them were saying, "John the Baptist has come back to life from the dead, and this is why he has these miraculous powers."

¹⁵Others were saying, "It's Elijah".*

And others were saying, "He's a prophet like one of the old prophets."

¹⁶But when Herod heard about this, he said, "It's John the Baptist. I cut off his head myself, but that's who it is. He has been raised back to life."

¹⁷You see, Herod was the one who had sent his men and arrested John, and had tied him up and put him in jail. He did this because he had married his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, ¹⁸and John kept on telling Herod, "It's against the law for you to be living with your brother's wife".*

¹⁹But it was Herodias who really hated John. She wanted to kill him, but she wasn't able to, ²⁰because Herod was afraid of John. He knew that John was a man who always tried to please God and do what was right, so he tried to protect him. And even though

Herod had talked with John many times, he didn't know what to do. But he always liked to listen to John.

21Then the time came that Herodias had been waiting for. It was on Herod's birthday, when he put on a big dinner* for all his government officials and generals, and the leading citizens of Galilee. **22**During the dinner Herodias' daughter came in and danced, and Herod and his guests really enjoyed it. So the king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." **23**In fact, he even took an oath* - "I swear that I'll give you whatever you ask for, up to half of my kingdom."

24So the girl went out and asked her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

And her mother answered, "John the Baptist's head."

25So the girl hurried back to the king as fast as she could and told him, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's head on a serving plate immediately!"

26Now the king was terribly sorry that he had made such a promise, and because he had given his word under oath in front of all the guests. But he didn't want to break his promise to the girl. **27**So right away the king sent off one of his men as his special messenger with orders to bring back John's head. And the man went to the jail and cut off John's head. **28**Then he brought it back on a serving plate and gave it to the girl, who gave it to her mother.

29And when John's followers heard about it, they came and carried his body away and buried it in a cave.

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Men

Spring, 28

30When the apostles came back, they gathered around Jesus and told Him about all the things they had done, and the things in the Bible which they had explained to the people.

31Then Jesus said to them, "You men come with me, and we'll go to some deserted place where we

can be alone, and you can have a little rest." You see, there were so many people coming and going that they didn't even have time to eat. ³²So they went off in their boat to a deserted place where they could be alone.*

³³A lot of people however saw them going, and knew where they were going. So people from all the towns around there ran on foot, and got there ahead of Jesus and His followers. ³⁴And when Jesus got out of the boat and saw that big crowd of people there, He felt sorry for them, because they were like "a flock of sheep who didn't have a shepherd".[†] So He began to explain to them a lot of things in the Bible.

³⁵Soon it was past the middle of the afternoon, and Jesus' followers came to Him and said, "We're out here where there are no people living, and it's already very late. ³⁶Tell the people to leave, so that they can go into the farms and villages around here and buy themselves something to eat."

³⁷But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

And they replied, "If we're going to give them something to eat, we'll have to go and buy two hundred dinars!* worth of bread. Do You want us to do that?"

³⁸And Jesus answered, "How many little loaves of bread* do you have? Go and see."

So when they had found out, they said, "We have five loaves, and two fish."

³⁹Then Jesus ordered them to tell all the people to stretch out on the green grass in groups. ⁴⁰So they stretched out in groups of fifty and a hundred, looking like beds of flowers in a garden.

⁴¹Then Jesus took the five little loaves of bread and the two fish and looked up to heaven, and asked God to bless them. And then He broke the loaves of bread into pieces, and kept on giving the pieces to his followers to serve to the people. He also divided up the two fish so that they all had some. ⁴²And they

all ate until they were full.

43Afterwards they picked up twelve big baskets full of broken pieces of bread and fish that were left over. **44**And there were five thousand men who had eaten.

Jesus Walks on the Water and Calms a Storm

45As soon as they had picked up the food, Jesus made His followers get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side of the lake, across from Bethsaida, while He sent the crowd away. **46**But after He said good-bye to the people, He climbed up the mountain to pray. **47**And by late afternoon the boat was out in the middle of the lake and Jesus was all alone on the land.

48A little while before sunrise Jesus saw that they were having trouble rowing the boat, because the wind was blowing hard against them. And by now He was on the way out to the boat, walking on top of the water. He was going to walk right on past the boat. **49**But when they saw Him walking on top of the water, they thought He was a ghost, and they started to scream. **50**You see, they were all terribly frightened when they saw Him.

But right away Jesus started to talk to them. "Be brave!" He said. "It's really me. You mustn't be afraid." **51**Then He climbed up into the boat with them, and the wind died down. By now they were so amazed that they didn't know what to think. **52**You see, they didn't understand about the bread, because their minds had become as hard as stone and weren't working.

Jesus Heals a Lot of Sick People in Gennesaret

53When they got to the other side of the lake, they landed at Gennesaret* and anchored the boat. **54**And as soon as they had gotten out of the boat, the people there recognized Jesus. **55**So they ran all over that part of the country and told the others where Jesus was. And everyone began to bring their sick people to Jesus on little padded mats.*

56 And wherever Jesus went, whether it was into the villages, the cities or the farms, the people brought their sick people and put them down in the town squares,* and begged Jesus to let them just touch one of the little tassels* on His long outer cloak. And all those who did so were made well.

Jesus Talks about the Pharisees' Rules

7 One day some Pharisees* and scribes* came all the way from Jerusalem, and gathered around Jesus.

2 And they noticed that some of Jesus' followers were eating their meals with 'unclean' hands. What this means is that they were eating without washing their hands first. **3** You see, the Pharisees won't eat unless they really scrub their hands. This is one of the laws handed down by their ancestors,* which they keep very faithfully. In fact, all the Jews follow this rule.

4 And when they come from the town square, they don't eat unless they wash themselves. And they follow a lot of other rules which they have gotten from their ancestors, things like washing their cups and pitchers and pans.*

5 So those Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus, "Why don't your followers follow the laws handed down by our ancestors? Why do they eat their meals with 'unclean' hands?"

6 Jesus answered, "Isaiah was certainly writing about hypocrites like you, people who are just pretending to be God's people, when he said,

'This nation honors Me with their lips,
but their hearts are far away from Me.

7 Their worship doesn't mean a thing,
because the things they are teaching are
man-made rules'.⁺

8 You have thrown out God's commandments, and you're holding fast to your man-made laws that have been handed down to you. **9** You do a fine job of canceling out God's commandments in order to set up the laws that were handed down to you from your ancestors.

10"For example, Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother!'+ and 'Anyone who says anything bad about his father or mother must be killed'.+ **11**But you people say, 'A person can say to his father or mother, "Whatever money I had that I could have used to help you is 'Korban'," ' which means, 'it has been given to God.' **12**And if he does this, you allow him to do nothing for his father and mother any longer. **13**In this way you take all the power and authority out of God's Word by these laws which have been handed down to you. And you do exactly the same thing with many of God's other commandments."

14Then Jesus called the crowd together again and said to them. "You must all listen to me and understand this. **15**There's nothing which comes from the outside and goes into a person which can make him 'unclean'. Instead, it's the things which come out of a person which make him 'unclean'."

17Later, when Jesus had left the crowd and gone into His house, His followers asked Him about what He had just told them.

18And He said to them, "Are you men also so stupid? Don't you understand that nothing that goes into a person from the outside can make him 'unclean'? **19**Because it doesn't go into his heart, but into his stomach, and then it passes out into the toilet." When Jesus said this, He made all foods 'clean'.

20And then He added, "It's what comes out of a person that makes him 'unclean'. **21**You see, sinful thoughts come from the inside, out of people's hearts, and lead to sexual sins, stealing, murder, **22**adultery and greed, all kinds of wickedness, cheating, filthy immoral behavior and jealousy. They lead people to say nasty and insulting things, to be proud and puffed up, and to act like people who have no sense. **23**All of these wicked things come out from the inside and make a person 'unclean'."

Jesus Heals a Syro-phoenician Woman's Daughter

24 Jesus then got ready and left Gennesaret to go to the district around Tyre.* And when He found a place to stay there, He didn't want anyone to know that He was there. But He couldn't keep it a secret.

25b You see, there was a woman there whose little daughter had an evil spirit inside of her. **26a** This woman was a Greek, but she had been born in Syro-phoenicia. **25a** And as soon as she heard about Jesus, **25c** she went to Him and fell down at His feet,* **26b** and asked Him to drive the demon out of her daughter.

27 Jesus said to her, "You must let the children be fed first. After all, it isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the pet dogs."

28 But the woman replied, "Lord, even those pet dogs under the table eat the scraps of food the children throw on the floor."

29 Then Jesus said to her, "Go on home. Because of that answer the demon is gone from your daughter."

30 And when she got back home, she found her child lying on her bed, and the demon was gone.

Jesus Heals a Man Who was Deaf and Dumb

31 After Jesus left the district around Tyre, He went through Sidon, then back to Lake Galilee and through the middle of the district of Decapolis.*

32 And one day some people brought Him a man who was deaf and almost unable to talk, and begged Jesus to put His hand on the man.

33 First Jesus took the man away from the crowd to a place where they could be alone. Then He poked His fingers into the man's ears, and spit and touched his tongue. **34** Next He looked up to heaven and sighed deeply and said to the man, "Eff-fatha," which means, "Open up!" **35** And right away the man's ears were opened, and his tongue came untied, and he began to talk plainly.

36 Then Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone.

But the more He ordered them not to talk, the more they kept on spreading the news. ³⁷They were completely amazed. "Now everything is perfect!" they said. "He's even making deaf people hear and dumb people talk."

Jesus Feeds Four Thousand Men

⁸In a few days there was another great crowd of people gathered together. And since they didn't have anything to eat, Jesus called His followers together and said to them, ²"I feel sorry for this crowd of people, because they have been staying here with me for almost three days, and now they don't have anything to eat. ³If I send them home without eating, they'll be so weak that they won't be able to walk home, for some of them have come a long way."

⁴His followers answered, "Where could anyone find the food to feed all these people out here where there are no people living?"

⁵Then Jesus asked them, "How many little loaves of bread* do you have?"

"Seven," they answered.

⁶Then Jesus ordered the crowd to stretch out on the ground. Next He took the seven little loaves of bread and said a prayer of thanksgiving. Then He broke them into pieces, and kept on giving them to His followers to serve to the people, which they did. ⁷They also had a few small fish. So when Jesus had asked God to bless them, He told His followers to serve these to the people too.

⁸And the people ate until they were full. Afterwards they carried away seven very large baskets of broken pieces that were left over. ⁹And there were about four thousand people there. Then Jesus sent them home ¹⁰and got into the boat with His followers and went to the district of Dalmanutha.*

The Pharisees Ask for a Special Miracle

¹¹When Jesus got there, some of the Pharisees*

came out from one of the towns and began to argue with Him. As a test they wanted Jesus to have God work a special miracle, to show that God had sent Him.

12 So Jesus gave a deep groan and said, "Why are the Israelites who are living today looking for a special miracle? I'm telling you the truth when I say that God will never give them such a miracle." **13** Then He sent them away and got back into the boat and sailed off again to the other side of the lake. **14** But when they left, they forgot to take along any food, and except for one little loaf of bread, they had nothing to eat on the boat.

Jesus Warns His Followers against the Pharisees

15 After a while Jesus said to His followers, "Watch out, and be on your guard against the 'yeast' of the Pharisees and Herod." *

16 This got them started talking among themselves, because they were wondering if He had said this because they didn't have any bread.

17 And since Jesus knew what they were saying and thinking, He said to them, "Why are you talking about not having any bread? Can it be that you still don't know or understand? Have your minds turned to stone?"

18 'You have eyes.

Can't you see?

You have ears.

Can't you hear'?" +

And don't you remember?

19 When I broke the five little loaves of bread for the five thousand men, how many big baskets full of broken pieces did you carry home?"

"Twelve," they answered.

20 "And when I broke the seven little loaves for the four thousand men," said Jesus, "how many bigger baskets full of broken pieces did you carry home?"

"Seven," they answered.

21"Then Jesus said to them, "And you still don't understand?"*

Jesus Heals a Blind Man in Bethsaida

22Then they landed at Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch the man. 23So Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. Then He spit in the man's eyes and put His hands on him and asked him, "Do you see anything?"

24The man looked up and said, "I see those people over there, because they're walking around, but they look like trees."

25Then Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes again. And after this the man opened his eyes wide, and his sight came back, and he could see everything clearly.

26Then Jesus sent the man home. And as He did so, He said, "Don't go back into the village!"

What the People were Saying about Jesus

27Jesus and His followers then left Bethsaida to go to the villages around Caesarea Philippi.* And on the way Jesus asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

28And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others say one of the prophets."

29Then Jesus asked them, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?"

And Peter answered, "You are the promised Savior."*

30But Jesus warned them not to talk to anyone about this.

Jesus Tells His Followers about His Death

31Then Jesus began to explain to His followers that the Son of Man* would have to go through a lot of suffering. He said that the members of the Council,* the head priests,* and the scribes* would not accept Him as the promised Savior, and that they would kill Him; but that He would come back to life again

three days later. **32**He told them all this very plainly.

Then Peter took Jesus off where He could talk to Him alone and began to scold Him. **33**But Jesus turned around and looked at His followers, and then He scolded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan," He said. "because your mind isn't filled with God's thoughts, but with men's thoughts."

Jesus Talks about Becoming His Follower

34Then Jesus called His followers and the crowd together and said to them, "If it's true that a person wants to become one of my students, he must forget about himself, put his cross on his shoulders and carry it, and stay with me all the time. **35**You see, the person who wants to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life for the sake of the Good News will save it. **36**After all, what does a person gain if he becomes the owner of the whole world and destroys his Life? **37**For what kind of a ransom could a person ever pay to get his Life back?

38"You see, if a person is ashamed of me and my teachings in today's godless and sinful world, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in all His Father's shining heavenly beauty, with His holy angels."

9 And then He added, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that some of the people who are standing here will never die until they see God's Kingdom with all its power right here."

Jesus Shows His Followers His Heavenly Beauty

2Six days later Jesus took Peter, James and John along with Him and led them up a high mountain, where they could be alone. And there Jesus was changed, right before their very eyes, so that He looked like a different person. **3**His clothes became more sparkling white than any kind of bleach or chemicals could ever make them. **4**Then they saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus.

5And when Peter had a chance to speak, he said to Jesus, "Rabbi,* it's wonderful for us to be here. Let's make three tents - one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." **6**You see, he didn't know what to say, because they were so frightened.

7Then a cloud formed right over their heads, shading them from the sun, and a voice came out of the cloud. "This is My Son," it said, "My own dear Son. Listen to Him!" **8**And when they looked around, they suddenly noticed that no one was there any longer except Jesus. He was all alone with them.

9Later, as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone about what they had seen until the Son of Man had come back to life from the dead. **10**They did what He said, but they kept on talking among themselves about what "coming back to life from the dead" means.

John the Baptist was the Second Elijah

11Then the three apostles asked Jesus, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah has to come first?"

12And Jesus answered, "Certainly Elijah will come first, and he will get everything all set up again. But what does the Bible say about the Son of Man? It says that He will go through a lot of suffering, and people will treat Him as someone who doesn't amount to anything at all.* **13**But I'm telling you that Elijah is here, and the people have done whatever they wanted to him, just as the Bible says about him."*

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon inside of Him

14When they got back to the rest of Jesus' followers, they saw a big crowd of people around them, and some scribes arguing with them. **15**And as soon as the people in the crowd saw Jesus, they became very excited, and they ran to meet Him, all giving Him a friendly greeting.

16"What are you arguing about?" Jesus asked them.

17One of the men in the crowd replied, "Rabbi,

I brought my son to You. He has a spirit inside of him that can't hear or talk. ¹⁸And whenever the spirit takes control of him, it throws him on the ground, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and gets stiff as a board.* I asked Your followers to drive the spirit out, but they couldn't do it."

¹⁹Jesus answered, "The Israelites of today have no faith at all. How long do I have to be with you? How long do I have to put up with you? Bring the boy to me!"

²⁰So they brought the boy to Jesus. But as soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it threw the boy into a convulsion, and he fell down on the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

²¹Then Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

And the father replied, "Since he was a little boy. ²²Many times this spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him into the fire and into the water. But if You can do anything, have pity on us and help us."

²³And Jesus answered, "The question is, if you can do anything. Everything is possible for the person who believes."

²⁴Right away the father yelled, "I'm trying to believe. Please help me get rid of my unbelief!"

²⁵But now Jesus saw that a crowd was gathering. So He told the evil spirit to behave himself and said to him, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I'm giving you an order. Come out of this boy, and don't ever go into him again!"

²⁶Then the spirit gave a loud yell and threw the boy down on the ground. But it did come out of him. But now the boy looked like he was dead, and most of the people were saying that he had died. ²⁷But Jesus took hold of the boy's hand and helped him get up, and he stood on his feet.

²⁸Later, when Jesus had gone into the house and His followers were alone with Him, they asked Him,

"Why couldn't we drive that spirit out?"*

29And Jesus answered, "Prayer is the only thing that can drive this kind of a spirit out."

Jesus Talks again about His Death

30Then Jesus and the apostles left that area and travelled around through Galilee. But Jesus didn't want anyone to know that He was there, **31**because He was explaining the Bible* to His followers and telling them, "The Son of Man will be given over into the hands of sinful men, and they will kill Him. But three days later He will come back to life again." **32**However they didn't know what He was talking about, and they were afraid to ask Him.

Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?

33Then they went back to Capernaum. And when Jesus went into His house, He asked His followers, "What were you talking about on the road?"

34But they didn't say a word, because as they had been walking along, they had talked about which one of them was the greatest.

35So when Jesus sat down, He called the twelve apostles and said to them, "If a person wants to be the top man, he must be the bottom man, and everyone else's servant."

36Then He took a little child and stood him up where they could all see him. And He put His arms around the child and said, **37**"Anyone of my followers who is a friend to one little child like this is my friend. And anyone who is my friend is not only my friend, but also a friend of the One who sent me."

People Must be Either For Us or Against Us

38Then John said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we saw a man driving out demons by using Your name, and we tried to stop him, because he isn't one of our group."

39But Jesus replied, "Don't try to stop him, because no one who uses my name to work a miracle will be

able to turn right around and say something bad about me. ⁴⁰After all, anyone who isn't against us is on our side.

⁴¹"And I'm telling you the truth when I say that if someone gives you a cup of water to drink because you're my follower, that person will never lose his reward.

Falling into Sin and Losing One's Faith

⁴²"And if someone causes one of these little ones who believe to lose his faith, that person would be better off if a big millstone were tied around his neck and he was thrown into the ocean.

⁴³"So if your hand is causing you to fall into sin and lose your faith, cut it off. It's better for you to go into the next Life injured than to have two hands and go away into hell, where the fire never burns out.

⁴⁵Or if your foot is causing you to fall into sin and lose your faith, cut it off. It's better for you to go into the next Life crippled than to have your two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye is causing you to fall into sin and lose your faith, gouge it out. It's better for you to go into God's Kingdom with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where

'the worms that eat them up never die,
and the fire is never put out'.⁺

⁴⁹"You see, everyone is going to be 'salted' with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is a wonderful thing. But if it loses its saltiness, what can you use to make it salty? You must keep yourselves 'salty', and live in peace with each other."

Jesus Talks about Marriage and Divorce

Fall, 28

¹⁰ Then Jesus left Capernaum and went to that part of Judea which is on the east side of the Jordan river. And again crowds of people went with Him, and as usual He continued to explain the Bible to them.

²One day some Pharisees* came to Jesus and asked

Him if the Law allows a man to divorce his wife. They were testing Him, trying to get Him to say something wrong.

³Jesus answered, "What commandment did Moses give you?"

⁴They answered, "Moses said that a man could 'write out a notice of separation and divorce his wife'."⁺

⁵And Jesus replied, "Moses wrote that commandment for you because you won't listen to God, or believe what He says. ⁶But at the beginning, when God created the world, He 'made them male and female'.⁺ ⁷And therefore, 'a man must leave his father and mother, ⁸and he and his wife will become one'.⁺ That means they are no longer two persons, but one body. ⁹Therefore no human being must ever separate what God has joined together."

¹⁰Later, when they were in the house where they were staying, His followers asked Jesus about this.

¹¹And Jesus said to them, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is sinning against his first wife by living with a woman who isn't his wife. ¹²And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she is living with a man who isn't her husband."

Jesus Talks about Little Children

¹³The people were also bringing their little children to Jesus, so that He could touch them; but His followers scolded them. ¹⁴And when Jesus saw this, He became angry, and He said to them, "You must let the little children come to me! And don't try to stop them! After all, God's Kingdom is made up of people just like them. ¹⁵I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who doesn't receive the news about God's Kingdom like a little child does will never get into it at all." ¹⁶And after He had given each one of them a big hug, He put His hands on them and asked God to make them happy.

Jesus Talks about Rich People

17As Jesus was leaving that town to get back on the road, a man ran up to Him and got down on his knees in front of Him.* "Good teacher," he said. "What must I do so that I will receive eternal Life as God's child and heir?"*

18Jesus replied, "Why do you say that I'm good? God is the only one who is good. **19**You know the commandments. 'You must not kill! You must not have sex with anyone except your own husband or wife! You must not steal! You must not tell lies about other people!'+ 'You must not cheat!'+ 'You must honor your father and mother!'+"

20The man answered, "Rabbi,* I have kept all these commandments ever since I was a young man."

21When Jesus looked into the man's face, He couldn't help loving him, and He said, "There's one thing that you haven't done. Go and sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have a great treasure in heaven. And then come and live with me as one of my students."

22When the man heard this, there was a pained look on his face, and he went away feeling very sad, because he had a lot of money and property.

23Then Jesus looked all around Him and said to His followers, "How hard it will be for rich people to get into God's Kingdom."

24His followers were astonished at these words. So Jesus told them again, "Children, how hard it is to get into God's Kingdom. **25**It's easier for a large rope* to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into God's Kingdom."

26Now His followers were so amazed that they didn't know what to think. They kept on saying to themselves, "Then who can be saved?"

27So Jesus looked them in the eye and said, "It's impossible for any person to save himself, but God can save him. You see, everything is possible for God."

28Then Peter spoke up. "Look at us," he said. "We have given up everything we had and have stayed with You as Your students."*

29And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that everyone who has given up his home, or his brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or his farm for my sake and for the sake of the Good News **30**will receive much more now in this present world - a hundred times as many homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms, along with some terrible things that people will do to you. And in the world to come you will have eternal Life. **31**But many who are first now will be last, and many who are last now will be first."

Jesus again Talks about His Death

32One day they were walking along the road, and Jesus was in front, leading the way, since they were still heading for Jerusalem. The crowds were astonished at this, and Jesus' followers were afraid. So once again Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and began to talk to them about what was going to happen to Him. **33**"Listen carefully," He said. "We're going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man* is going to be handed over to the head priests* and the scribes,* and they will put him on trial and sentence him to death. Then they will hand him over to the people of the other nations.* **34**And they will make fun of him, and spit on him, whip him and kill him. But on the third day he will rise back to life again."

James and John Ask for a Special Favor

35Later James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to Him, "Rabbi, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

36So Jesus asked them, "What is it that you want me to do for you?"

37And they replied, "When You are sitting on Your throne in Your shining heavenly beauty, give us permission that one of us can sit at Your right hand, and the other at Your left."

38Jesus answered, "You don't know what you're asking for. Are you able to drink the cup of suffering which I'm going to drink, or be baptized in the kind of pain and agony which I'm going to be baptized in?"

39And they answered, "Yes, we are."

Then Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup that I'm going to drink, and you will be baptized in the kind of baptism I'm going to have. **40**But it isn't possible for me to give you permission to sit at my right hand or my left hand. That honor belongs to those whom God has already chosen."

41Of course when the other ten apostles heard this, they became upset and angry with James and John.

42So Jesus called them all together and said to them, "You know that among the other nations the men whom the people recognize as their rulers treat their people like slaves, and the government officials show their authority by pushing people around. **43**But that isn't the way it is with you. The one who wants to become the big man in your group must be your servant.

44And the one who wants to be the head man in your group must be everyone else's slave. **45**After all, the Son of Man didn't come to be served. He came to serve and to give His life as a ransom to set many people free." **46**As He said this, they were coming into the old city of Jericho.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

And as Jesus and His apostles were leaving the old city of Jericho, a good sized crowd of people was following them. And there was a blind beggar sitting along the side of the road. His name was Bar-Timaeus (the son of Timaeus). **47**And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to yell, "Son of David! Have pity on me!"

48Many of the people began to scold the man, telling him to be quiet, but he just yelled all the louder, "Son of David! Have pity on me!"

49Then Jesus stopped and said, "Call the man!"

So they called out to the blind man, "Cheer up! And get up on your feet! He's calling you."

50 So the beggar threw off his long outer cloak, and jumped to his feet and went to Jesus.

51 "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

And the blind man answered, "Rabbi, I want to see again."

52 And then Jesus said to him, "You may go! Your faith has made you well." And right away the man could see again, and he started to follow along behind Jesus on the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Spring, 29, Sunday

11 As they got closer to Jerusalem, they were just coming into Bethphage and Bethany, on the slopes of Mount Olive. And there Jesus sent out two of His followers with these orders. **2** "Go into the village over there,* and as soon as you get into town, you'll find a colt tied up on which no one has ever ridden.* Untie it and bring it here. **3** And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' tell him, 'Our Master needs him, and He'll send him back here right away!'"

4 So the two men started off, and they found a colt standing in the street, tied up just outside the door of one of the houses. They were just untying it, **5** when some of the men who were standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying this colt?"

6 So the two answered just as Jesus had told them to, and the men let them take it. **7** Then they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their long outer cloaks on the colt's back, and Jesus rode on him.

8 Many of Jesus' followers spread their long outer cloaks on the road, while others spread branches which they had cut from the trees in the fields. **9** And the people who were walking in front of Jesus and those who were following along behind Him were all yelling,

"Save us, O Lord!

'God's blessing on the one who comes
as the Lord's messenger!'+

10 God's blessing on the coming Kingdom
of our father David.

Save us, O Lord in heaven!"+

11 And when Jesus got into Jerusalem, He went into
the Temple-yard* and looked around at everything.
But since it was now late in the afternoon, He left
and went back to Bethany with the twelve apostles.

Jesus Cleans out the Temple-yard

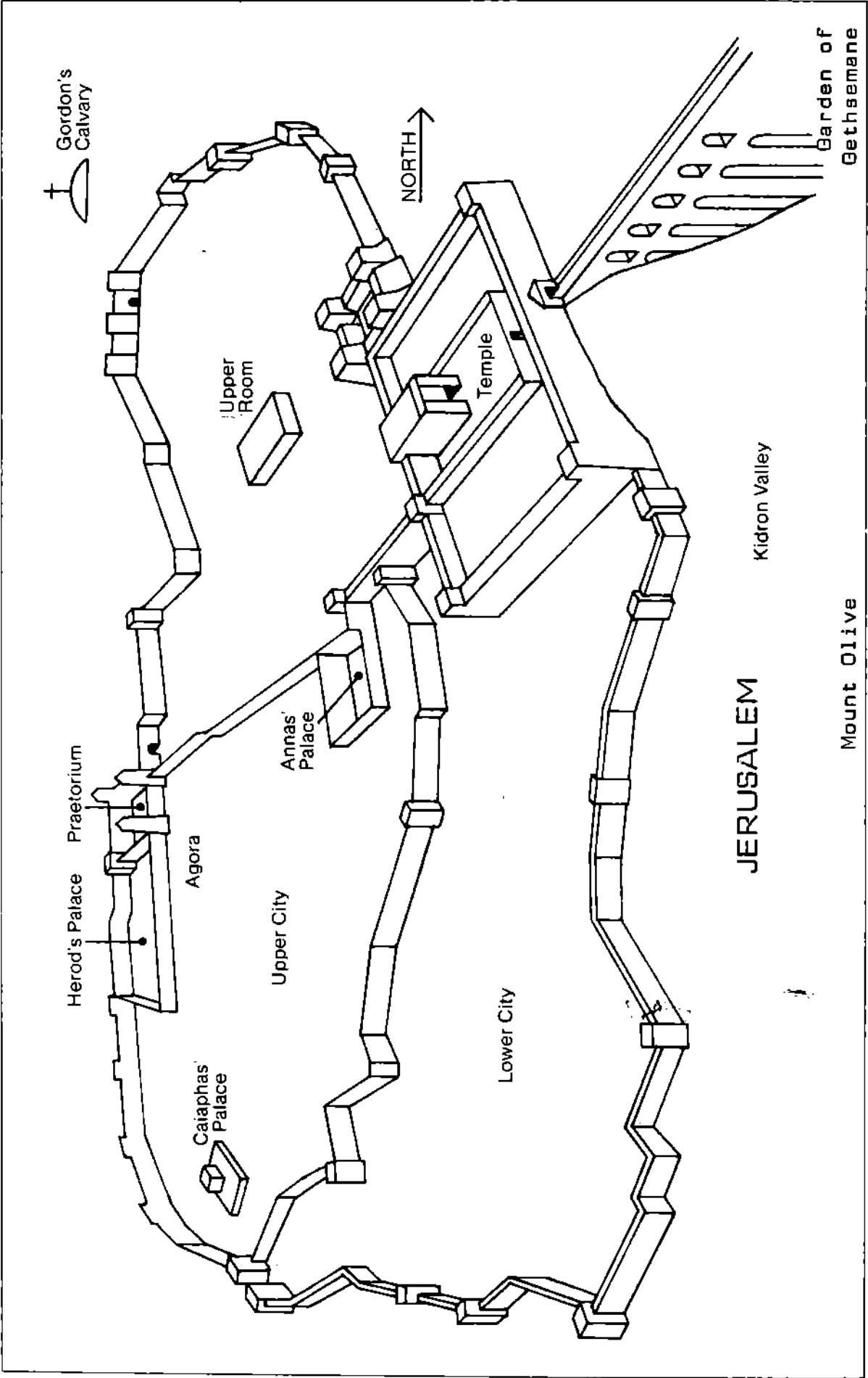
Monday

12 The next morning, after they had left Bethany,
Jesus got hungry. **13** And as He looked around, way
up ahead of Him He saw a fig tree that had leaves
on it. So when He came to the tree, He went to see
if He could find some figs on it. But when He got
there, He didn't find anything but leaves. (Of course,
it wasn't the right time of year for figs). **14** So He
said to the tree, "No one will ever again eat any fruit
from you - never!" And His followers heard Him say
this.

15 And when they got to Jerusalem, Jesus went into
the Temple-yard* and began to drive out the men
who were selling and buying things there. He tipped
over the bankers' tables, and the chairs of the men
who were selling pigeons. **16** And He didn't let anyone
carry anything to be bought or sold through the Temple-
yard. **17** Then He began to explain the Bible* to the
people by saying, "Doesn't the Bible say, 'My house
will be called a house of prayer for the people of all
nations'?+ But you have made it 'a hideout for
robbers'."+

18 When the head priests and the scribes heard
this, they began to look for some way to kill Jesus.
You see, they were afraid of Him, because all the
people there were completely amazed at the way He
explained the Bible.

19 And when it got towards the end of the afternoon,
Jesus and His followers left the city.



Jesus Explains about the Fig Tree**Tuesday**

20Early the next morning, while Jesus and His followers were walking along the road, they saw the fig tree all dried up, right down to the roots. **21**And Peter remembered what Jesus had said. So he said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree You cursed is all dried up."

22Jesus said to them, "You must have faith in God. **23**I'm telling you the truth when I say this. A person can say to God, 'Pick this mountain up and throw it into the ocean!' And if that person has no doubts in his heart, but really believes that what he says will happen, God will do it for him.

24"This is why I'm telling you that you must believe that you have already received all the things you're praying and asking for, and you will receive them.

25And when you're standing and praying, if you have anything against anyone, you must forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your sins."

The Jewish Leaders Challenge Jesus' Authority

27Soon they were coming back into Jerusalem. And while Jesus was walking around in the Temple-yard, the head priests, and some scribes, and some members of the Council* came up to Him. **28**"What kind of authority do you have to be doing things like this?" some of them asked.

And some of the others said, "And who gave you this authority to be doing these things?"

29Jesus answered, "I'm going to ask you one question. You give me the answer, and I'll tell you what kind of authority I have to be doing these things. **30**What about John's baptizing? Was his authority from heaven or from other people? Give me your answer."

31So they began to talk this over among themselves. "If we say, 'From heaven,' he'll say, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' **32**But should we say, 'From other people?' . . ." You see, they were afraid of the crowd,

because everybody believed that John was a real prophet.

33 So they answered, "We don't know."

And Jesus replied, "Then neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to be doing these things."

The Story of the Wicked Farmers

12 Then Jesus began to use little stories as He talked to them. "There was a man who 'planted a field full of grape vines. Then he built a wall around it, carved out a round bowl in a large rock where they could put the grapes to squeeze the juice out of them, and built a tower for a watchman'.¹ Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and left home on a trip.

2 "When it was time to pick the grapes, the man sent one of his slaves to the farmers to collect from them his share of the crop from the vineyard. **3** But the farmers grabbed the slave and beat him up and sent him away empty-handed. **4** Then the owner sent another slave to them, but the farmers beat this man's head until it was all bloody, and were mean and insulting to him. **5** So the owner sent another slave, and they killed that one. After this the owner sent a lot of other slaves, and the farmers beat up some of them and killed the rest of them.

6 "Now the only person the owner had left to send was his son whom he loved very much. So as his last hope, he sent this son to those farmers. 'They'll have some respect for my son,' he thought.

7 "But those farmers said to each other, 'This is the heir who will own everything when his father dies. Come on! Let's kill him, and all his property will be ours.' **8** And so they grabbed him and killed him, and threw him outside the vineyard.

9 "Now then, what will the owner of the vineyard do?" Jesus asked.

And the priests and Council members answered, "He'll go and kill those farmers, and then he'll rent out the vineyard to some other farmers."

10 Then Jesus replied, "You have read this part of

the Bible, haven't you?

'A stone which the builders decided was no good
is the very one which has become the cornerstone.

11 It's the Lord who did this,
and we think it's wonderful!" "†*

12 So the Jewish leaders kept on trying to find some way to arrest Jesus, because they knew that He had told this story about them. But they were afraid of the crowd, so they left Him and walked away.

The Pharisees and Herodians Ask a Question

13 Later on they sent some of the Pharisees* and some of Herod's followers to Jesus to try to catch Him in a trap by using a trick question. **14** They came to Jesus, and one of them said, "Rabbi,* we know that you're a man who tells the truth, and you don't worry about what anyone says or thinks, because you don't judge people by their outward appearance. And we know that you always teach people the truth about God's Road.* Does the Law allow us to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor or not?"

And then another one said, "Must we pay them or not?"

15 But Jesus knew what they were doing, so He said to them, "Why are you trying to trick me into saying something wrong? Bring me a dinar,* and let me look at it."

16 And when they brought Him one, He said to them, "Whose face and name is this?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

17 So He replied, "Pay the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor, and pay God what belongs to God." And they were completely astonished by His answer.

The Sadducees also Question Jesus

18 Next some Sadducees* came to Jesus. They're the ones who say that the dead can't come back to life, and they also had a question for Jesus. **19** "Rabbi," they said, "Moses wrote a law for us which says, 'If

a man's brother dies and leaves behind a wife, but no child, that man must take his brother's widow and raise a family for his brother'.⁺

20"Once there were seven brothers. The oldest one got married, but when he died, he didn't leave any children. **21**So the second brother married the widow, but he also died and didn't leave any children. Then the third brother did the same thing, **22**and finally all seven did. None of them left any children. And last of all, the woman also died.

23"When the dead come back to life, whose wife will she be? After all, all seven had her as their wife."

24Jesus said to them, "Why are you so mixed up? Isn't it because you don't know the Bible, or anything about God's power? **25**You see, when the dead come back to life, they won't be getting married or being married, but they'll be like the angels in heaven.

26"And while we're talking about the dead, and the fact that they're going to be raised back to life, haven't you read in the book of Moses, in the story about the burning bush, how God said to him, 'I AM* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?⁺ **27**He certainly isn't a God of dead people, but of living people. You're far away from the truth!"

Which is the Greatest Commandment?

28One of the scribes* had heard Jesus and the Sadducees arguing. And when he saw that Jesus had given them a fine answer, he came up to Jesus and asked Him, "Which is the most important of all the commandments?"

29Jesus answered, "The most important one is, 'Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. **30**And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul,' all your mind 'and all your strength'.⁺ **31**And this is the second most important one - 'You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself'!⁺ There can be no other commandment greater than these two."

32The scribe then said to Jesus, "Very good, Rabbi! You spoke the truth when you said that our God 'is the one true God',⁺ 'and apart from Him there can be no other god'.⁺ **33**And to 'love Him with all your heart, all your mind, and all your strength',⁺ and to 'love your neighbor as much as you love yourself'⁺ is much more important than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34When Jesus saw that the man had given a very intelligent answer, He said to him, "You aren't very far away from God's Kingdom."

And after that no one dared to ask Jesus any more questions.

Jesus Asks the Scribes a Question

35Later, while Jesus was explaining the Bible to the people in the Temple-yard,* He said to them, "How can the scribes say that the promised Savior is the son of David? **36**David himself spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit when he said,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
'Sit down here at My right hand
until I put Your enemies under Your feet'.⁺

37David himself calls Him 'Lord'. So where do they get the idea that the promised Savior is his son?" Oh how that big crowd of people loved to listen to Jesus!

Jesus Warns the People against the Scribes

38And while Jesus was explaining the Bible He said, "Watch out for those scribes who like to walk around in their special robes, and be greeted as important people in the town squares,* **39**and have the special chairs in the meeting houses* and the places of honor* at the dinner parties. **40**They throw widows out of their homes, and then try to make people think they're very religious by saying long prayers. Men like this will be punished more than other people."

Jesus Talks about Giving

41 Then Jesus sat down opposite the collection boxes,* and watched the crowd of people dropping their money into the boxes. There were many rich people dropping in large amounts of money. **42** And then one poor widow

came up and dropped in two leptons,* which make a quad.



COLLECTION BOX

43 When Jesus saw this, He called His followers together and said to them, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that this poor widow has given more than all the others who are dropping their gifts into the collection boxes. **44** You see, all the others gave some of their extra money that they didn't need; but this woman, who didn't even have enough for her daily needs, has given everything she had - all the money she had to live on."

Jesus Describes the Destruction of the Temple

13 As Jesus was leaving the Temple-grounds, one of His followers said to Him, "Look, Rabbi. What beautiful stones! What lovely buildings!"

2 Jesus answered, "You're looking now at these great buildings. But every stone here is going to be thrown to the ground, until there isn't a single one left standing on another one."

Jesus Talks about the End of the World

3 Later, while Jesus was sitting on Mount Olive,* across the valley from the Temple-yard, Peter, James, John and Andrew came up to Him when no one else was around. Then one of them asked, **4** "Tell us when this will happen."

And another one said, "And what will happen which will tell us when all these things You have told us about are going to take place?"

5So Jesus began to explain it to them. "Watch out," He said, "so that someone doesn't fool you and try to lead you astray. **6**A lot of men will come using my name and saying, 'I'm the promised Savior;*' and they will fool a lot of people and lead them astray.

7"And when you hear the sounds of wars close by, and the news of wars far away, don't be frightened and upset! These things have to happen; but it will be a while yet before the end comes. **8**Nations will attack other nations, and kingdoms will go to war against other kingdoms. And there will be earthquakes in all kinds of places, and famines. But these things are like the first pains that a woman has before her child is born.

9"Then you must watch yourselves. People will have you arrested and brought to trial before their councils. They will beat you with rods in their local courts. And because you're my followers, you will be brought to trial before governors and kings, so that you can tell them what you know about me. **10**But before the end comes the Good News must be brought to the people of all the nations.*

11"And when they arrest you and bring you in for trial, don't worry ahead of time about what you're going to say. When the time comes, say whatever comes into your mind, because it isn't you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12"People will even hand over their own brothers to be arrested and killed. Fathers will hand over their children, and children will rise up against their parents and kill them. **13**And everyone will hate you because you're my followers. But the person who patiently holds on to his faith to the end will be saved.

Jesus Describes the Destruction of Jerusalem

14"The one who reads this had better pay attention! When you see 'that filthy, disgusting thing that destroys everything it touches'+ standing where it shouldn't be, the people who are in Judea must try to escape

into the hills. **15**The man who is on the roof of his house must not go back down or go inside to take anything out of his house; **16**and the man who is out in the field must not go back home to get his long outer cloak. **17**How terrible it will be at that time for women who are going to have a child and those who are nursing their babies. **18**And you must pray that this won't happen in the winter, **19**for that will be a time of 'great suffering. It will be so great that until now there has never been anything like it since the beginning, when God created the world, nor ever will be again'.⁺ **20**But because of His chosen people the Lord has already decided to make that time of suffering a short one. If He hadn't done so, not one single person would ever be saved.

21"At that time if someone says to you, 'Look! Here's the promised Savior!' or 'Look! There he is!' don't believe it. **22**For there will be false saviors and false prophets rising up, and they will work miracles and do wonderful things, trying to fool God's chosen people and lead them astray, if such a thing is possible. **23**And so you must watch out! I have told you everything ahead of time.

The World Will End when Jesus Returns

24"But sometime after that time of great suffering,
'the sun will become as black as night,
and the moon will stop shining'.⁺
25 And 'the stars will be falling out of the sky,'⁺
for 'God will shake the heavenly bodies
like a tree'.⁺

26"And then people will see the Son of Man* coming on the clouds, with great power and shining heavenly beauty. **27**And then He will send out His angels, and 'gather together' His chosen people from all four directions, 'from the farthest end of the earth to the farthest end of the universe'.⁺

28"And so you must learn your lesson from the fig tree. When the time comes that the branches become

soft and green, and the leaves are budding out, you know that summer is almost here. ²⁹And in the same way, when you see these things happening, you must know that the Son of Man is almost here, standing just outside the door.

³⁰"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the kind of Israelites living today will never disappear until all these things happen. ³¹The heavens and the earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

No One Knows the Time

³²"But no one knows when that day will come, or at what time of day it will happen. Not even the angels in heaven know this, not even the Son. Only the Father knows.

³³"Therefore you must see to it that you're always awake and watching what's going on, because you don't know when that time will come. ³⁴It's like a man who leaves home on a trip. He puts his slaves in charge of his business, and gives each one his own special job. And he orders the gatekeeper to stay awake.

³⁵"So you also must stay awake, because you don't know when the Master of the house will come back, whether it will be late in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, early in the morning, or just before sunrise. ³⁶You must stay awake, so that He doesn't come suddenly and find you sleeping. ³⁷And what I'm telling you I'm telling everyone. You must stay awake!"

The Plot to Kill Jesus

Wednesday

¹⁴ It was now two days* before the festival of the Passover* and the No-yeast Bread* would begin. And the head priests* and the scribes* were trying to find some way to arrest Jesus by using some kind of a trick or a trap, and kill Him. ²"But we mustn't do it during the festival," they said, "because we don't want to start a riot among the people."

Jesus is Anointed in Simon the Leper's House

3That afternoon Jesus was in Bethany, at the house of Simon, who had been a leper. And while He was eating dinner* a woman came in with a white stone jar of very expensive perfume, made out of pure nard.* Then she broke the jar and poured out the perfume on Jesus' head.

4Some of the people there became upset and angry about this, and they were talking among themselves. "Why waste all this perfume?" they said. **5**"After all, she could have sold this perfume for more than three hundred dinars,* and given the money to the poor." And then they began to scold her.

6But Jesus said to them, "Leave her alone! Why are you making trouble for her? She did a fine thing for me. **7**You see, you will always have poor people around you, and whenever you want, you can do some good thing for them; but you won't always have me. **8**She made use of what she had. She has put this perfume on my body ahead of time to get it ready to be buried. **9**And I'm telling you the truth when I say that wherever the Good News is made known throughout the whole world, the story of what this woman has done will be told, so that people will remember her."

Judas Makes His Bargain to Betray Jesus

10Then Judas the Keriothan,* who was one of the twelve apostles, went off to the head priests to tell them that he would hand Jesus over to them. **11**And when the head priests heard what he had to say, they were very happy, and they promised to pay Judas some money. And so Judas began to look for some good time to hand Jesus over to them.

Jesus Prepares to Eat the Passover

Thursday

12The first day of the festival of the No-yeast Bread was the day when they killed the passover lamb. So that morning Jesus' followers said to Him, "Where

do You want us to go to get things ready, so that You can eat the Passover supper?"

13So Jesus sent out two of His followers with these instructions - "Go into the city, and when you meet a man carrying a jar of water, follow him. **14**And when he goes into his house, tell the owner of that house, 'Our teacher sends this message - "Where is my guest room, where I can eat the Passover supper with my followers"?' **15**Then he will show you a large room on the second floor, all set up and ready for dinner. Get things ready for us there".*

16And so the two followers started off and went into the city, where they found everything just as Jesus had told them. And they got the Passover supper ready.

Jesus Talks about His Betrayal

17Towards the end of the afternoon Jesus came to the house with the twelve apostles. **18**And while they were at the table eating dinner,* Jesus said to them, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that one of you, 'a man who is eating with me,' is going to hand me over to my enemies."†

19This made them feel very sad; and one after the other they began to ask Him, "Surely it isn't I, is it?"

20And Jesus replied, "It's one of you twelve, a man who is dipping his food into the dish* with me. **21**You see, the Son of Man is going to die just as the Bible says He will, but how terrible it will be for that man who hands the Son of Man over to his enemies! It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

The First Lord's Supper

Friday*

22While they were eating, Jesus took a little round loaf of bread* and asked God to bless it. Then He broke it into pieces and gave them to the others. "Take this," He said, "this is my body."* **23**Later He took a cup and said a prayer of thanksgiving and gave it to them. And while they were all drinking from it,

24He said to them, "This is my blood of the agreement,* which is being poured out for many people. **25**I'm telling you the truth when I say that I will never again take a drink of this wine until that Day when I drink it in a new way in God's Kingdom." **26**Then they sang a hymn and left the house to go to Mount Olive.

Jesus Warns Peter That He will Deny Him

27On the way Jesus said to them, "You're all going to lose your faith, because the Bible says,

'I will kill the shepherd,
and his sheep will be scattered'.⁺

28But after I have been raised back to life, I will go back to Galilee ahead of you."

29But Peter said to Jesus, "Even if all the others lose their faith, I won't."

30And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will say three times that you don't want anything to do with me."

31Then Peter became excited and began to talk louder, "Even if I have to die with You, I will never say that I don't want anything to do with You!" And they all said the same thing.

Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

32Soon they came to a place called Gethsemane,* and Jesus said to His followers, "You sit here while I pray."

33Then He took Peter, James and John along with Him, and began to feel worried and troubled. **34**He said to them, "My heart is so full of sorrow that it's almost killing me. Stay here and stay awake!"

35Then He went a little farther and fell down on the ground and prayed that since it was possible, God might not make Him go through this time of suffering. **36**He said, "Abba," which means 'My Father,' "everything is possible for You. Take this cup* away from me. However don't do what I want, but what You want."

37Then He went back to His three followers and found them sleeping. "Simon," said Jesus, "are you sleeping? Didn't you have the strength to stay awake for one hour? **38**You must stay awake, and keep praying that you won't have to be tested! Your spirit is willing, but your sinful body is weak".*

39Then He went away again and prayed, saying the same thing. **40**And when He came back again, He found them sleeping. You see, they were so sleepy that they couldn't keep their eyes open; and they didn't know what to answer Him.

41But when He came back the third time, He said to them, "Are you going to keep on sleeping and resting all night? Enough is enough! The time has come! Listen to me! The Son of Man is being handed over into the hands of sinful men. **42**Get up! We have to go! Look! The one who is handing me over is here!"

Jesus is Arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane

43And right away, while Jesus was still talking, one of the twelve apostles arrived. His name was Judas, and there was a crowd of men with him who were carrying swords and clubs. They had been sent by the head priests and the scribes and the members of the Council.*

44Earlier the traitor had given the others a signal - "The man I kiss is your man. Grab him and take him away under close guard!" **45**So as soon as Judas got there, he went up to Jesus and said, "Rabbi",* and kissed Him several times. **46**And then some of the men grabbed Jesus and held Him tight.

47But now one of the men who was standing by Jesus drew his sword and took a swing at the Head Priest's slave and cut off his ear.

48And later Jesus said to the crowd, "Did you have to come out here with swords and clubs to capture me, as though I was starting a revolution? **49** I was with you every day in the Temple-yard explaining the Bible to the people, and you never arrested me.

But this has happened so that what God says in the Bible would come true." ⁵⁰Then all of His followers left Him and ran away.

⁵¹And there was one young man following Jesus who was wearing only a linen sheet wrapped around him. So when they tried to capture him, ⁵²he slipped out of the sheet and ran away naked.*

Jesus' "Trial" at Caiaphas' House

⁵³Then the men led Jesus away to the house of the Head Priest,* where all the head priests* and some of the members of the Council and the scribes* were gathering together. ⁵⁴And Peter followed, staying a long ways behind Him, until he got into the yard around the Head Priest's house. And soon Peter was sitting there with the servants in front of a fire, trying to keep himself warm.

⁵⁵At this time the head priests and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to find some information about some wrong thing Jesus had done, so that they could have Him killed. But they weren't finding any. ⁵⁶You see, a lot of people were accusing Jesus of doing things which He hadn't done, but their stories didn't agree.* ⁵⁷But finally some men stood up and told this lie about Him: ⁵⁸"We heard this man say, 'I'm going to tear down this Temple, which men have built, and in three days I'm going to build another Temple without any man's help'."* ⁵⁹But even so their stories didn't agree.

⁶⁰Then the Head Priest stood up in front of them and asked Jesus, "Aren't you going to give any answer at all? What about the charges these men are bringing against you?"

⁶¹But Jesus didn't say a word. He didn't give any answer at all.

Jesus' Trial Before the Sanhedrin

Later the Head Priest* asked Jesus another question, "Are you really the promised Savior,* the Son of the One we praise and worship?"

62 And Jesus replied, "Yes, I am, and
'you will see the Son of Man*
sitting at the right hand of the Almighty One',⁺
and 'coming with the clouds of heaven'."⁺

63 Then the Head Priest tore his clothes and said,
"Why do we have to have any more witnesses? **64** You
heard how he insulted God. How does it look to you?"

And they all said that He was guilty, and that he
must die. **65** Then some of them began to spit in His
face, and others blindfolded Him and hit Him with
their fists and said to Him, "Speak like a prophet!"*
Even the servants slapped Him in the face.

Peter Denies Jesus

66 Peter was still in the yard, when one of the Head
Priest's servant girls walked by **67** and saw Peter as
he was trying to keep himself warm. She stared at
him for a while, and then she said, "You're one of those
who was with Jesus of Nazareth!"

68 But Peter denied it. "I don't know and I don't
understand what you're talking about." Then he left
the group and went over by the gate.

69 Later that same servant girl saw Peter and started
to say the same thing to the men who were standing
there, "This fellow is one of His followers."

70 And again Peter said that he wasn't.

And a little later the men who were standing there
also began to talk to Peter. "Sure enough," they said,
"you're one of His followers. After all, you're a Gali-
lean."

71 Then Peter began to curse and swear. "May God
send me to hell if I'm not telling the truth," he said.
"I don't know this man you're talking about!" **72** And
as soon as he said it, a rooster crowed the second time,
and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him - "Be-
fore the rooster crows twice, you will say three times
that you don't want anything to do with me." And
then he started to cry and sob.

Jesus' Trial before Pilate

15 As soon as it got light, the head priests,* the officers of the synagogues,* the scribes,* and the whole Sanhedrin worked out their plan. Then they tied Jesus' hands together, and led Him away and handed Him over to Pilate.*

2 So Pilate began to question Jesus. "Are you really the king of the Jews?" he asked.

And Jesus answered, "Are you saying that I am?"

3 Then the head priests began to accuse Jesus of doing many things that were wrong.

4 And finally Pilate asked Him another question, "Aren't you going to give any answer at all? Look at all the things they're accusing you of doing!"

5 But Jesus didn't give any further answer at all. And this was something Pilate couldn't understand.

Jesus is Sentenced to Death

6 However, at every Passover festival the governor always set one prisoner free, whichever one the people asked for. **7** And at that time there was a man called Barabbas, who was in jail with some men who had tried to overthrow the government, and had killed some people in the revolution.

8 So when a crowd had gathered, they began to ask Pilate to do them their usual favor.

9 Pilate therefore asked them, "Do you want me to set this king of the Jews free for you?" **10** You see, he knew that the head priests had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous of Him.

11 But the head priests got the crowd all stirred up, so that they asked Pilate to set Barabbas free instead.

12 Then Pilate asked them his next question, "Then what do you want me to do with this king of the Jews?"

13 And they yelled back, "Put him on a cross!"

14 "But what has he done that's wrong?" said Pilate.

But they just yelled all the louder, "Put him on a cross!"

15 And since Pilate wanted to keep the crowd happy, he set Barabbas free for them. Then he had Jesus whipped and handed Him over to be put on a cross.

The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

16 The soldiers then led Jesus away into the yard around the governor's palace, which was called the "Praetorium",* and called the whole regiment together.

17 First they dressed Jesus up in a purple cloak. Then they twisted some thorn branches together into a crown, and put it on His head. **18** And then they began to salute Him, saying, "Good morning, king of the Jews!"

19 After that, each one beat Him on the head with a stick, and spit in His face, and got down on his knees in front of Him, with his forehead on the ground.*

20 And when they finished making fun of Him, they took off the purple cloak and put His own clothes back on Him, and led Him out to put Him on the cross.

Jesus is Put to Death

21 On the way they forced a man named Simon to carry Jesus' cross.* He was from Cyrene, and he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. He was just walking by, coming in from the country. **22** Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha,* which means "the Skull", **23** and "offered Him some wine which was mixed with myrrh".*+ But Jesus didn't take it. **24** Then they put Him on a cross and

"divided up His clothes among themselves
by shaking the lot* for them"+

to see who got what. **25** It was nine o'clock in the morning when they put Him on the cross. **26** There was also a sign, giving the reason why He was being killed. It read, "The King of the Jews." **27** And along with Jesus they put two robbers on crosses, one at His right, and the other at His left.

29 All day long the people who were passing by "shook

their heads"⁺ at Jesus and said all kinds of nasty and insulting things to Him. "This isn't possible!" they said. "You're the one who is going to tear down the Temple and rebuild it in three days. ³⁰Come down from the cross and save yourself!"

³¹The head priests were also making fun of Him in the same way, joking among themselves and with the scribes. One of them said, "He saved other people, but he isn't able to save himself."

³²Another one said, "The promised Savior, the King of Israel! He must come down from the cross right now, so that we can see it. Then we'll believe in Him."

Even the men who were being crucified with Him said nasty things to Him.

³³Then at twelve o'clock it suddenly got dark all over the whole land, and it stayed dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ³⁴And at that time Jesus called out in a loud voice "Eh-low-ee, Eh-low-ee, lema' sabachtanee," which means, "My God! My God! Why have You left me all alone?"⁺

³⁵When the people who were standing there heard this, some of them said, "Listen! He's calling Elijah."

³⁶Then one of them ran off and filled a sponge with "sour wine," and put it on a stick, and started to 'give Jesus a drink'.⁺ But as he did so, he said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."

³⁷And a little later Jesus gave a loud yell, and stopped breathing. ³⁸And the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

³⁹At that time the Roman army captain was standing right in front of Jesus. And when he saw the way He just stopped breathing, he said, "This man really was God's Son!"

⁴⁰There were also some women there who were watching from a distance. Among them was Mary from Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of little James and Joseph. ⁴¹These were women who followed Jesus and took care of Him when He was in Galilee.*

And there were also a lot of other women who had come along with Him up to Jerusalem.

Jesus is Buried

42By now it was late afternoon on "Preparation Day",* which is the day before Saturday, **43**when a man named Joseph from Arimathea came out to the place where Jesus was hanging. He was an important member of the Council, but he was another one who was waiting for God's Kingdom to come. So he gathered up his courage and went to Pilate, and asked for Jesus' body.

44Pilate however couldn't believe that Jesus was already dead. So he called the Roman army captain and asked him if Jesus had already died. **45**And when he heard the captain's report, Pilate gave the body to Joseph.

46So Joseph bought a linen sheet, and took the body down from the cross. Then he wrapped the body in the sheet, and put it in a cave which had been carved out of the rock, and rolled a stone in front of the mouth of the cave.

47And Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching, and they saw where he put the body.

Jesus Comes Back To Life Again

16 After that Saturday ended,* Mary from Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James bought spices, so that they could go and anoint Jesus' body.*

2And very early on Sunday morning, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the grave. **3**And as they walked along, they were talking among themselves. "Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the mouth of the cave?" they said. **4b**You see, it was a very large stone. **4a**But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away.

5And when they went into the cave, they saw a young man sitting on the right hand side. He was dressed

in a white robe, and when they saw him, they didn't know what to think.

6"You mustn't be so mixed up," he said. "You're looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was killed on the cross. He has been raised back to life. He can't be here. Look! There's the place where they put Him. **7**But now you must go and give this message to His followers, and especially Peter - "He's going back to Galilee ahead of you. And you're going to see Him there, just as He told you."

8And then the women left the cave and ran away, because they were trembling with fear, and didn't know what to do. So they didn't say anything to anyone, because they were afraid*

The Ending That was Added Much Later

9Mary from Magdala, from whom Jesus had driven out seven demons, was the first one who saw Jesus early Sunday morning, after He had come back to life again. **10**And she went and told the news to His followers,* who were crying and sobbing, and feeling very sad. **11**But when they heard that Jesus was alive, and that she had seen Him, they didn't believe it.*

12Later two of His followers saw Him as they were walking along out in the country, but He looked like a different person to them. **13**These men also went back and told the rest of the group, but the others didn't believe them either.*

14After that He appeared to the eleven apostles while they were having dinner.* And He scolded them about their lack of faith and their closed minds, because they hadn't believed those who had seen Him alive.*

15He also said to them, "You must go all over the whole world, and bring the Good News to every person.*

16The person who believes and is baptized will be saved, but the one who doesn't believe will be condemned.* **17**And those who believe will work miracles.*

They will drive out demons by my power and authority,* and will speak in new languages.* **18**And even if they

pick up snakes* or drink some poison, they won't be hurt at all. They will put their hands on sick people and make them well".*

19And after the Lord had talked with His followers, He was taken up into heaven,* and sat down at God's right hand.* **20**So they went out and spread the Good News everywhere. And the Lord worked with them, and proved that what they said was true by the miracles which followed their preaching.*

Another Shorter Ending Added Much Later

Later the women reported briefly everything they had been told to say to Peter and his friends. And after this Jesus Himself sent out His holy and ever-living message of eternal salvation from the east to the west through those men.

THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO LUKE*

(Written in Caesarea, 57-59 A.D.)

Luke's Foreword

Dear Theophilus:

¹ Many people have tried to give us a written account of the things that have happened here in our land. ² And the people who saw and heard all this from the very beginning have become the caretakers of this information, and they have passed it all on to us.

³ And since I have also studied all these things very carefully, going all the way back to the very beginning, your honor, I thought it would be a good thing to write it all down for you just as it happened, ⁴ so that you can be sure that you know the truth about the things you have been taught.

John the Baptist's Birth Announced

7/6 B.C.

⁵ During the time when Herod was the king of Judea* there was a priest by the name of Zechariah. He belonged to the Abijah family,* and his wife was a member of Aaron's family.* Her name was Elisabeth. ⁶ Both of them were perfectly holy in God's sight,* and they tried to keep all of God's commandments and laws as perfectly as possible. ⁷ But they didn't have children, because Elisabeth couldn't have any, and at that time both of them were very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah was doing his work as a priest during the week when his group was on duty at God's house. ⁹ In those days the priests used to shake the lot* each day to see which job each man was going to have. And on that day Zechariah was chosen in this way to go into the Lord's Temple* to burn the incense. ¹⁰ And while the incense was being offered,

*Helpful notes for Luke begin on page 762

the whole crowd of worshipers stood outside praying.

11But while Zechariah was in the Temple, he saw one of the Lord's angels standing on the right side of the incense altar. **12**When Zechariah saw the angel, he was very excited and afraid. **13**But the angel said to him, "You mustn't be afraid, Zechariah, because God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elisabeth is going to have a little boy, and you must call him 'John'. **14**He will bring you joy and happiness. And many people will be very happy when they hear that he has been born.

15"For he will be a great man in the Lord's eyes. He will never drink any wine or liquor at all, but he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he's born. **16**And He will turn many of the Israelites back to the Lord their God. **17**In fact, he's the one who will go out ahead of the Lord to get things ready for Him, like another Elijah. He will also work with the power of Elijah 'to make the fathers love their children',⁺ and the disobedient change their ways by making them think like those who do what God wants. It will be his job to get people ready for their Lord."

18But Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? After all, I'm an old man, and my wife is very old."

19And the angel answered, "I am Gabriel, the angel who stands at God's side. I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. **20**But now I must tell you that because you didn't believe what I said, you will hear no sound and you won't be able to speak until the day when all this happens. And when the right time comes, it will all come true."

21While all this was going on, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering why he was staying in the Temple for such a long time. **22**And when he did come out, he wasn't able to speak to them.

⁺Verses quoted in Luke begin on page 876

But they finally realized that he had seen something strange there in the Temple. He kept on trying to "talk" to them by using his hands and shaking his head, but he still couldn't speak or hear anything. ²³And when his week of service at the Temple was ended, Zechariah went back home.

²⁴Some time later his wife Elisabeth became pregnant, and she didn't leave the house for five months. ²⁵"The Lord has done this for me," she said. "He has looked down on me in mercy, and has taken away the reason why I have always felt so ashamed when I was with other people."

God Announces the Birth of Jesus to Mary 6/5 B.C.

²⁶About three months before Elisabeth was going to have her baby, God sent the angel Gabriel to the city of Nazareth, in the district of Galilee.* ²⁷He was to go to a young girl named Mary, who was a member of David's family, and she was the promised wife of a man whose name was Joseph.

²⁸When the angel came into her house, he said to her, "Good morning, my dear. The Lord is always watching over you."

²⁹But Mary didn't understand what he meant, and she was wondering why he had spoken to her like this.

³⁰Then the angel said to her, "You mustn't be afraid, Mary, for God loves you very much. ³¹Now listen carefully! You are going to become pregnant and have a Son, and you must call Him 'Jesus'. ³²This child will be a great man, and He will be called the 'Son of the only true God'. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³He will be the King over Jacob's family forever and ever. Yes, His kingdom will never end".⁺

³⁴"But how can this be?" said Mary to the angel, "since I am a virgin."

³⁵The angel answered,

"The Holy Spirit will come over you,
and the power of the only true God will cover you.

And therefore the holy child which is born
will be called 'God's Son'.

36"And now I'll tell you something wonderful about your cousin Elisabeth. Even she has become pregnant and is going to have a son in her old age. People say that she can't have any children, but her child will be born in three months. **37**You see, 'There is nothing that God cannot do'."⁺

38And Mary said, "Just think! I'm the Lord's slave! I pray that everything happens to me just as you have said." And then the angel left her.

Mary Goes to See Elisabeth

6 B.C.

39Then Mary packed her things and went to a town in the hill-country of Judah,* **40**where she went to Zechariah's house and said 'hello' to Elisabeth. **41**And as soon as Elisabeth heard Mary's voice, the baby inside of her jumped, and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. **42**She gave a loud shout and said to Mary, "God has made you the greatest of all women, and given you the greatest child ever born! **43**But why should this happen to me, that my Lord's mother should come to visit me? **44**You see, as soon as I heard your greeting, something strange happened. The baby inside of me jumped for joy. **45**And how happy the woman is who believes that the things the Lord has told her will come true."

Mary's Song of Praise

46Then Mary said,

" 'I keep on telling myself,

"How wonderful the Lord is!"'

47 And 'when I think of God, my Savior,'
my heart 'is filled with joy,'⁺

48 because 'He has looked down in mercy
on His slave in her lowly position.'⁺

Just think! From now on people of all ages
will speak of how happy I am,

49 because the Almighty has done great things for me.
And He is Holy;

50 and from age to age His mercy and kindness

will keep on reaching out to those who fear Him.

51 He does powerful things with His arm.

He destroys the proud

by the thoughts of their own hearts.

52 He throws mighty rulers down from their thrones,
and gives the lowly ones a high position.*

53 He fills the hungry with good things,
and sends the rich away with empty hands,

54a He helps His servant Israel,

55a as He promised our forefathers,

54b to remember and be merciful

55b to Abraham and his family forever."*

56 And Mary stayed with Elisabeth about three months,
and then she went back home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

6 B.C.

57 So the time came for Elisabeth to have her baby,
and she gave birth to a son. **58** And when her neighbors
and relatives heard how wonderfully kind and merciful
the Lord had been to her, they were as happy as she
was.

59 Then on the eighth day they came to circumcise*
the child. They were going to call him Zechariah after
his father, **60** when his mother spoke up and said, "No,
he must be called John."

61 And they replied, "There's nobody in your family
who has that name." **62** So they asked his father, using
sign language, what name he wanted to give the child.

63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His
name is John." And they were all astonished.

64 But as soon as he wrote the words, Zechariah's
mouth was opened and his tongue was untied, and he
began to talk, singing praises to God.

65 When Zechariah's neighbors saw this, they were
all filled with fear; and all over the hill-country of
Judea people were talking about all these things.

66 Everyone who heard about what had happened kept
on thinking about it. "What do you suppose this child

will turn out to be?" they said, for the Lord's power was plainly at work in his life.

Zechariah's Song of Praise

67 Then Zechariah, the child's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke as a prophet.*

68 " 'Praise the Lord, Israel's God',"⁺ he said,
"because He has looked down upon His
people in mercy,
and has set them free.

69 He has raised up His saving power
in the family of His servant David,

70 just as He said He would,
when He spoke through the mouths of
His holy prophets⁺
from the beginning of time.

71 He said He would save us from our enemies,
and from the power of all those who hate us.

72 He told our forefathers that He would be kind
and merciful to them,
and that He would remember His
holy agreement,*

73 by the oath* which He swore to our father
Abraham.*

74 In this agreement He promised that
after we had been rescued from the power
of our enemies,

He would allow us to serve Him in His presence
without fear,

75 by living holy lives and doing what God says
is right as long as we live.

76 And you, my child, will be called
a prophet of the one true God,
for you will go out 'ahead of the Lord
to get the roads ready which He will use'.⁺

77 You will tell God's people what they must know
about their salvation,

that their sins are taken away,
78 because our God's heart is full of mercy
and pity.

And because of this, the rising sun
 will shine forth upon us out of heaven,
79 'to give light to those who are sitting in the
 darkness
 and in the shadow of death'.⁺
 and to guide our steps onto the road of peace."

80 And the child grew and became a man of great spiritual strength. Then he lived in the desert until the time came to show the people of Israel who he was.

The Birth of Jesus

6/5 B.C.

2 About the time John was born the Roman Emperor Augustus* sent out an order that they must take a census of the whole Roman Empire. **2** This was the first census, and it was taken while Quirinius was the Governor of Syria. **3** So everyone went to his own home town to have his name listed on the records.

4 Joseph was a member of David's tribe and family. So he went up from the city of Nazareth, in the district of Galilee,* to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, in the district of Judea,* **5** to have his name listed on the records there. And Mary, his promised wife who was going to have a baby, went along with him. **6** And while they were there in Bethlehem the time came for Mary to have her baby, **7** and she had a son, her first child. She wrapped him in soft cloths, and made a bed for him in a feed-box for the sheep, because the second floor guest room was full.*

God Gives the Good News to Some Shepherds

8 There were also some shepherds out in the fields around the village, standing guard over their flock during the night. **9** And suddenly one of the Lord's angels was standing beside them, and the Lord's shining heavenly brightness was flashing all around them, and they were terribly afraid. **10** "You mustn't be afraid," said the angel. "Listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you, because I'm bringing you good news about something which will bring great joy to all the people

of Israel. **11**Your Savior was born today in the city of David - the Messiah,* the Lord! **12**And this is how you will know Him. You will find a baby wrapped in soft cloths, lying in a feed-box for the sheep."

13Then all of a sudden there was a great army of angels standing beside the first angel, singing praises to God.

14 "Glory and honor to God in heaven," they said,
"and on earth peace for all people,
because of God's good will". *

15When the angels had left them and gone back to heaven, the shepherds began to talk among themselves. "Come on," they said, "let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing which has happened, and which the Lord has told us about." **16**So they went as fast as they could, and hunted around until they found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the feed-box.

17When they saw the baby, they told Mary and Joseph what the angel had told them about this child. **18**And all the people who heard their story were astonished at the things the shepherds told them. **19**Mary especially remembered everything they said, and kept on thinking about these things.

20Then the shepherds went back to their flock, praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. It was all just as the angel had said.

Jesus is Circumcised and Given to the Lord

21And on the eighth day, when the baby had to be circumcised,* they gave Him the name 'Jesus', which the angel had given Him before His mother became pregnant.

22And when the period of time had passed when Mary was "unclean"* according to Moses' Law, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to give Him to the Lord, **23**as it says in the Lord's Law, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be given to the Lord".⁺ **24**They also

went to offer a sacrifice, as the Lord's Law says — "A pair of doves, or two young pigeons".⁺

25 And now listen to this! There was a man by the name of Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a God-fearing man who was perfectly holy in God's sight, and he was waiting for the One who would bring comfort and courage to Israel. He was also filled with the Holy Spirit. **26** In fact, the Holy Spirit had told him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Lord's promised Savior.

27 And on that same day that Mary and Joseph went to the Temple-yard* to do the things the Law required them to do for their child, Simeon also came to the Temple-yard, because the Spirit had told him to go there. **28** And as soon as they came in, Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God.

29 "Master," he said, "You have kept Your promise.
Now You are letting Your slave go free
in peace.

30 For with my own eyes I have seen Your Salvation,
31 which You have prepared and set out for all
the nations of the world to see.

32 I have seen that Light which is to be shown to the
people of the other nations,*
and will be the glory of Your people Israel."

33 And Jesus' father and mother continued to be astonished at the things Simeon was saying about Him.

34 Then after Simeon had asked God to bless Jesus' parents, he said to Mary, "Listen carefully! This child will cause many people in the nation of Israel to stumble and fall. He will also raise up many of them to a new Life. He will be a sign from God, but many people will say nasty things about Him. **35** And in this way the inner thoughts in the hearts of many people will be uncovered. And as for you, a sword will be plunged into your heart."

36 There was also a prophet* by the name of Hannah in the Temple-yard that day. She was the daughter of Phanuel, and belonged to the tribe of Asher, and

she was very old. She had been married for seven years, ³⁷and then she had lived as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the Temple-grounds. Day and night she worshiped God, going without food* and praying. ³⁸She came up while Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph. And then she began to praise God and talk about the child to all those who were waiting for the time when Jerusalem would be set free.

³⁹And when Mary and Joseph had finished doing all the things that the Lord's Law required, they went back to Nazareth, the city in Galilee where they had been living. ⁴⁰And the child kept on growing. His body grew strong, and His mind became filled with wisdom, and in every way God showed how much He loved Him.

Jesus Goes to the Temple at Age Twelve

8

⁴¹Jesus' parents always went to Jerusalem every year for the Passover festival.* ⁴²And when Jesus was twelve years old* they all went up to Jerusalem, since everyone was supposed to go to the Passover. ⁴³And after they had stayed the whole eight days, the parents started home. The boy Jesus, however, stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents didn't know this. ⁴⁴They thought he was with some of the others in their group, and so they travelled for a whole day. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵But when they couldn't find him, they started back to Jerusalem, looking everywhere for Him. ⁴⁶And it wasn't until the third day that they found Him in the Temple-yard.* He was sitting in a group of rabbis,* listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And everyone who heard Him was amazed at how much He knew and the answers He was giving. ⁴⁸When His parents saw Him there, they didn't know what to think. It was His mother who spoke to Him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? You must know that your father and I have been worried sick. We've been looking all over for you."

49 Jesus answered, "What do you mean, that you were looking all over for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" **50** But they didn't understand what He was talking about.

51 Then Jesus left Jerusalem with them and went back to Nazareth, and He kept on doing whatever they told Him. His mother however remembered all these things that He had said, and kept on thinking about them. **52** So Jesus "kept on growing," both in mind and body. And "God loved Him more and more, and so did the people who knew Him".⁺

John the Baptist Begins His Work

Spring, 26

3 **1a** In the fifteenth year of the rule of the Emperor Tiberius,* **2b** God spoke to Zechariah's son John, while he was in the desert. **1b** At this time Pontius Pilate* was the Governor of Judea, Herod* was the ruler of Galilee, his brother Philip was the ruler of the district of Iturea and Trachonitis, Lysanius was the ruler of Abilene, **2a** and Annas and Caiaphas were the Head Priests.* And when God spoke to John **3** he went all up and down the Jordan river valley spreading the news that the people must change their minds and their way of living and be baptized, so that God would take away their sins. **4** And this was exactly what God said would happen in the book of Isaiah the prophet -

"Someone's voice is calling out in the desert,

'Get the Lord's highway ready!

Make His roads straight!

5 Fill up every valley,
and cut down every mountain and hill!
The curves must be straightened out,
and the rough roads must become paved
highways!

6 Then every person will see God's Salvation'."⁺

7 And when the crowds of people came out to be baptized, John said to them, "You're a nest of rattlesnakes! Who warned you that you should try to escape from God's holy anger which is coming? **8** You must

produce the kind of fruit which shows that you have changed your minds and your way of living. And don't begin to say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father,' for I'm telling you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham out of these stones. ⁹And right now the ax is hanging in the air, ready to strike at the root of the trees. And therefore every tree which doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰So the crowds began to ask him, "What should we do, then?"

¹¹And John answered, "The man who has two shirts must share with the man who doesn't have one, and the man who has something to eat must do the same thing."

¹²Even some tax collectors* came to be baptized, and they asked, "Rabbi, what should we do?"

¹³And John answered, "You mustn't collect any more than you are ordered to collect."

¹⁴Some soldiers also had questions. "What about us?" they asked. "What should we do?"

And John said to them, "You must never use threats or force or blackmail to get money from anyone. And you must be content with your pay."

¹⁵By now the people's hopes were running high, and they all kept on asking each other if John perhaps might not be the promised Savior.* ¹⁶But John gave them all the same answer. "I'm baptizing you with water. But a man is coming who is much more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to untie the straps of His sandals.* He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷He has His separating fork* in His hand to clean up His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn. But He will burn up the straw with a fire that can never be put out." ¹⁸John also urged the people to do a lot of other things as he brought them the Good News.

¹⁹John also told Herod, the governor of Galilee,

that he had sinned because he was living with Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the other wicked things Herod had done. ²⁰And so in addition to all his other sins Herod threw John in prison.

Jesus is Baptized

²¹And while all the people were being baptized, Jesus was also baptized. And afterwards, while He was praying, the heavens opened up, ²²and the Holy Spirit came down upon Him with a body that looked like a dove. And then a voice came out of the sky. "You are My Son," it said, "My own dear Son. You have made Me very, very happy."

Jesus' Family Tree

²³And when Jesus began His work, He was about thirty years old.* Everyone thought He was the son of Joseph, but He was really the Son of God, going back through His grandfather **Eli**,* ²⁴who was the son of **Matthat**, who was the son of **Levi**, who was the son of **Melchi**, who was the son of **Jannai**, who was the son of **Joseph**, ²⁵who was the son of **Mattathias**,



A SEPARATING FORK

who was the son of **Amos**, who was the son of **Nahum**, who was the son of **Esli**, who was the son of **Naggai**,
26who was the son of **Maath**, who was the son of **Mattathias**, who was the son of **Semein**, who was the son of **Josech**, who was the son of **Joda**,
27who was the son of **Joanan**, who was the son of **Rhesa**, who was the son of **Zerubbabel**, who was the son of **Salathiel**, who was the son of **Neri**,
28who was the son of **Melchi**, who was the son of **Addi**, who was the son of **Cosam**, who was the son of **Elmadam**, who was the son of **Er**,
29who was the son of **Joshua**, who was the son of **Eliezer**, who was the son of **Jorim**, who was the son of **Matthat**, who was the son of **Levi**,
30who was the son of **Simeon**, who was the son of **Judah**, who was the son of **Joseph**, who was the son of **Jonam**, who was the son of **Eliakim**,
31who was the son of **Melea**, who was the son of **Menna**, who was the son of **Mattatha**, who was the son of **Nathan**, who was the son of **David**,
32who was the son of **Jesse**, who was the son of **Obed**, who was the son of **Boaz**, who was the son of **Salmon**, who was the son of **Nahshon**,
33who was the son of **Amminadab**, who was the son of **Admin**, who was the son of **Arni**, who was the son of **Hezron**, who was the son of **Perez**, who was the son of **Judah**,
34who was the son of **Jacob**, who was the son of **Isaac**, who was the son of **Abraham**, who was the son of **Terah**, who was the son of **Nahor**,
35who was the son of **Serug**, who was the son of **Reu**, who was the son of **Peleg**, who was the son of **Eber**, who was the son of **Shelah**,
36who was the son of **Cainan**, who was the son of **Arphaxad**, who was the son of **Shem**, who was the son of **Noah**, who was the son of **Lamech**,
37who was the son of **Methuselah**, who was the son of **Enoch**, who was the son of **Jared**, who was the son of **Mahalaleel**, who was the son of **Cainan**,
38who was the son of **Enos**, who was the son of **Seth**, who was the son of **Adam**,
*****who was the son of **God**.

Jesus is Tested by the Devil

- 4** When Jesus came back from the Jordan river, He was filled with the Holy Spirit; and the Spirit then

led Him around in the desert ²for forty days while He was being tested by the devil. He didn't eat a single thing during that time; and at the end of the forty days He was hungry. ³Then the devil said to Him, "Since You are God's Son, tell this stone to turn into a little loaf of bread'.

⁴Jesus answered, "The Bible says, 'A man can't live on bread alone'."†

⁵Then the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a split second. ⁶"I'll make You master of all these kingdoms," said the devil, "with all their beautiful things, for it all belongs to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. ⁷And so if You will get down on Your knees in front of me, with Your forehead on the ground,* and worship me, it's all Yours."

⁸Jesus answered, "The Bible says,

'Get down on your knees before the Lord your God,
and worship only Him!'"†

⁹Then the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on the highest little roof of the Temple. "Since You are God's Son," said the devil, "jump down from here! ¹⁰For the Bible says,

'God will give His angels orders
to take good care of you'.

¹¹ 'And they will lift you up and carry you
in their hands,
so that you won't stub your toe on a stone'."†

¹²Jesus replied, "The Bible says, 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test!'"†

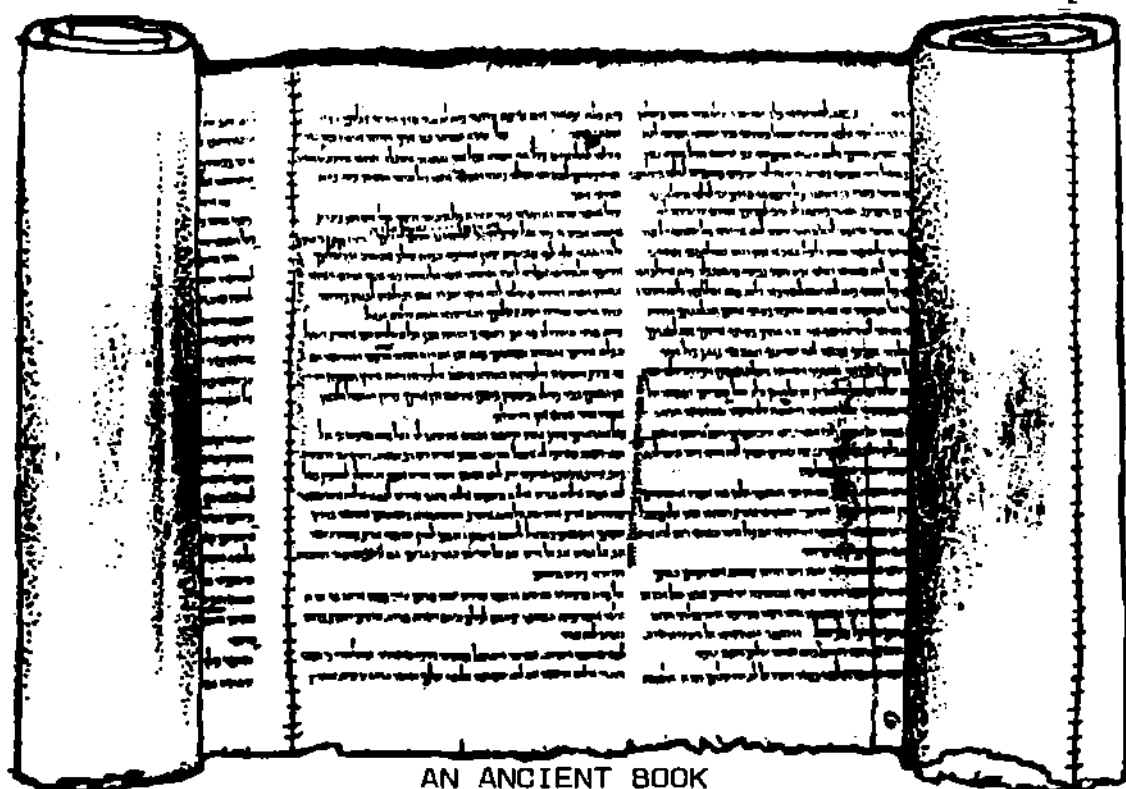
¹³And so when the devil had finished all his tests, he left Jesus, waiting for the right time to come.

Jesus is Thrown out of Nazareth

¹⁴Then Jesus went back to Galilee, filled with the power of the Spirit. And the news that He was there spread through the whole district. ¹⁵He spent His time explaining the Bible* to the people in their meeting

houses,* and everyone was praising Him.

16One day He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on Saturday* He went to the meeting house, as He did every Saturday. And when He stood up to read,* **17**they handed Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. Then he unrolled the book* and found the place



where it said,

- 18** "The Lord's Spirit has taken control of me,
because God has anointed* me
to bring the Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to spread the news that the
prisoners have been set free,
and the blind can see again.
He has sent me to set free those who are
suffering,
19 and to spread the news that this is the
year the Lord has chosen".⁺

20Then He rolled up the book, and gave it back to the librarian and sat down. And every eye in the meeting house was staring at Him **21**as He began to speak to them. "Today," He said, "this part of the Bible came true while you were listening to it."

22Soon they were all saying nice things about Him, and they were amazed at the beautiful words that were coming out of His mouth. They kept on saying, "This fellow is the son of Joseph, isn't he?"*

23And Jesus replied, "I'm sure that you will tell me that old saying, 'Doctor, make yourself well. We have heard about all the things you have done in Capernaum.* Do the same things here in your own home town.'

24"And I'm telling you the truth when I say that 'No prophet is made welcome in his own home town.'

25And I'm also telling you the truth when I say that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when there was no rain for three and a half years and a great famine spread over the whole land. **26**But Elijah wasn't sent to any of them. He was sent to a widow who lived in Sarepta, a town near Sidon.*

27And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha, but not one of them was made clean. It was only Naaman the Syrian who was healed".*

28When the people in the meeting house heard this, they all became angry. **29**They broke up the meeting, and dragged Jesus out of town to the edge of the cliff on which their city was built. They were going to throw Him over the cliff, **30**but He walked right through the middle of the crowd and left town.

Jesus Heals a Man with an Evil Demon

31Then Jesus went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee. And on Saturday* He was explaining the Bible* to the people. **32**And they were amazed at the way He explained the Bible, because He spoke like one who knows what he's talking about.

33That day there was a man in the meeting house* who had an evil demon inside of him, and this demon yelled as loud as he could, **34**"Let us alone! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are. You're God's Chosen Servant".*

35But Jesus told the demon to behave himself. "Shut your mouth!" He said. "And come out of him!"

Then the demon threw the man down on the floor in the middle of the room, where he rolled around, foaming at the mouth.* But then the demon went out of him without hurting him.

36Everyone there was completely astonished, and soon they were all talking to each other at the same time. "What kind of teaching is this?" someone asked. And someone else answered, "He gives orders to the evil spirits with authority and power, and they get out." **37**And so the news about Jesus began to spread into every part of the area around the city.

Jesus Heals a Lot of People in Capernaum

38After the service Jesus left the meeting house and went to Simon's house, where Simon's wife's mother was sick with a high fever. So they asked Jesus to help her. **39**And He went and stood beside the bed, and commanded the fever to leave; and it did leave. So she got up right away and started to get dinner for them.

40Later on, as the sun was setting, all the people who had sick friends and relatives brought them to Jesus. They had all kinds of sicknesses, and Jesus put His hands on each one of them and healed them. **41**He even drove out demons from many people. And as they left, they were yelling and shouting, "You really are God's Son!"

But Jesus told them to behave themselves. And He didn't allow them to speak any more, because they knew that He was the promised Savior.*

Jesus Travels All Over Galilee

42As soon as it got light the next day, Jesus left Capernaum and went out to a place where there were no people living. But later on the crowds began to look for Him, and when they found Him, they tried to keep Him from leaving them.

43But He told them, "I must bring the Good News about God's Kingdom to the other cities also. That's what I was sent to do." **44**And so He kept on spreading the news as far south as the meeting houses in Judea.*

Jesus Calls His First Four Followers

5One day Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret,* and the people were crowding around Him, listening to God's Word. **2**And as He was talking, Jesus saw two boats standing there on the shore. The fishermen had stepped out of them and were washing their nets. **3**So Jesus stepped into one of the boats which belonged to Simon, and asked him to row out a little ways from the shore. Then He sat there in the boat and went on explaining the Bible to all the crowds.

4And when He finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Take the boat out into the deep water, and lower your nets to catch some fish."

5And Simon answered, "Master, we worked hard all night, and we didn't catch a thing. But if You say so, I'll lower the nets." **6**And when they did, they caught so many fish that their nets began to tear. **7**So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And when they got there, they filled both the boats until they were so full that they were almost ready to sink.

8When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell down in front of Jesus and said, "Please, Lord, get away from me, because I'm a sinful man." **9**You see, he and all his crew were amazed at the number of fish they had caught. **10**And so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners.

But Jesus said to Simon, "You mustn't be afraid. From now on you will be catching men." **11**And so when they brought the boats back to land and pulled them up on the shore, they left everything they had and began to live with Jesus as their teacher.

Jesus Heals a Leper

12One day while Jesus was in one of the cities of Galilee, a wonderful thing happened. A man who was covered with leprosy saw Jesus, and fell down on the ground, with his forehead in the dust,* asking for help. "Lord," he said, "if You want to, You can make me 'clean'."*

13Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man,* and as He did so, He said, "I do want to. Be clean!" And right away the man's leprosy was gone.

14Then Jesus said to the man, "Don't talk to anyone. But go to the priest, and let him examine you.* And bring the sacrifice Moses ordered,+ because you have been made clean." **15**But in spite of Jesus' orders, the news about what He had done spread all over the area, and great crowds of people gathered to listen to Jesus and be healed from their sicknesses. **16**But Jesus would often go off by Himself to some place where there were no people living, and pray.

Jesus Heals a Man Who was Paralyzed

17One day while Jesus was explaining the Bible to the people, there were some Pharisees* and rabbis* sitting there. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea, and also from Jerusalem. On this day Jesus was healing the people, using His divine power.

18Then a wonderful thing happened. Some men came, carrying a man who was paralyzed on a little mat.* They wanted to bring the man inside the house and put him down in front of Jesus, **19**but they couldn't find a way to do it because of the crowd. So finally they climbed up on the roof and tore off some of the tiles. And then they lowered their friend, lying on his little mat, through the hole into the middle of the room, right in front of Jesus.

20When Jesus saw how much faith they had, He said to the man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven."

21And at once the scribes* and Pharisees began to say to themselves, "Who is this fellow who says things like this that are insulting to God? Is there anyone but God who can forgive sins?"

22Of course Jesus knew perfectly well what they were thinking, and so He asked them, "What are you thinking about in your hearts? **23**Is it easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? **24**But now I'll prove to you that the Son of Man* has the authority to forgive sins here on earth." So He turned to the paralyzed man and said, "I'm telling you to get up! Pick up your little mat and go on home!"

25And right away the man got up on his feet right in front of everybody, and picked up the mat on which he had been lying, and went home praising God.

26Everyone there was completely amazed, and they began to praise God. But they were also filled with fear, for they kept on saying, "We have seen some unbelievable things today."

Jesus Calls Levi to be His Follower

27After Jesus left the house, He saw a tax collector by the name of Levi* sitting at his collector's table,* and He said to him, "Come and live with me as one of my students!" **28**And Levi jumped to his feet and followed Him, leaving everything he had behind.

29Later on Levi had a big dinner* in his home, with Jesus as the guest of honor. And a big crowd of tax collectors and their friends came to the dinner. **30**So the Pharisees and their scribes began to complain to Jesus' followers about this. "Why are you eating and drinking with tax collectors and people whose lives are so sinful?" they asked.

31Jesus answered, "The ones who need a doctor are the sick people, not those who are in good health. **32**I'm not here to call people who are perfectly holy to be my followers. I'm here to call sinners, and tell them to change their minds and their way of living."

Jesus Talks about Going without Food

33Then some of the people said to Jesus, "John's followers often go without food* and pray, like the followers of the Pharisees. But Your followers are always eating and drinking."

34Jesus answered, "You can't make the wedding guests go without food, can you, while the bridegroom is with them? **35**But the time for going without food will come. Yes, when the bridegroom leaves them, then they will go without food."

36Then Jesus gave them this illustration. "No one cuts a patch out of a new cloak and sews it on an old cloak. If he does, he will ruin the new cloak, and the patch taken from the new cloak won't be the right kind of cloth for the old cloak."

37"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins.* If he does, the new wine will break the skins open. Then the wine will be spilled, and the skins will be ruined."

38Instead, new wine must be put into new wineskins.

39"And no one wants new wine after drinking old wine. The old saying is, 'Old wine is good wine!'"



WINESKINS

The Question of Working on Saturday

6 Once Jesus was walking through a field of grain on a Saturday.* And His followers were picking off the heads of grain, and rubbing them between their hands to take off the husks, and eating them. **2**But some of the Pharisees* said, "Why are you doing something which is against the Law on Saturday*?"

3Jesus answered, "Haven't you read about what David did when he and his men were hungry? **4**How he went into God's house and took some of the bread which was set out for God and ate it, and then gave some to the men who were with him?*" It was against the Law for them to do that. Only the priests are allowed to eat that bread." **5**Then He added, "The Son of Man has full authority over the day of rest."

Jesus Heals a Man on Saturday

6On another Saturday Jesus went to a meeting house* and began to explain the Bible* to the people. And there was a man there whose right hand was all dried up and dead. **7**So the scribes and Pharisees were watching Jesus carefully to see if He would heal this man on Saturday, so they could accuse Him of breaking the Law.

8Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking. So He said to the man who had the crippled hand, "Get up and stand here where everyone can see you." And the man got to his feet and did so.

9Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I'm asking you, does the Law allow us to do good things or bad things on our day of rest? Does it allow us to save life or destroy life on our day of rest?" **10**Then after He had looked all around the room at each one of them in turn, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" And when the man did so, his hand became perfectly well.

11But the Pharisees were filled with an insane kind of anger, and they began to talk back and forth among themselves about what they could do to Jesus.

Jesus Chooses Twelve Apostles

12A few days later Jesus left the city and went up into the hills to pray. And He spent the whole night there, praying to God. **13**The next morning He called His followers together and picked out twelve of them, whom He also called 'apostles'.* **14**There was Simon,

whom He also called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,* ¹⁵Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called "the Patriot", ¹⁶Judas the son of James,* and Judas from Kerioth, who became the one who handed Jesus over to His enemies.

The Crowds Come to Hear Jesus and be Healed

¹⁷Later on, when Jesus came down from the hills with His men, He stopped at a place where the ground was flat and level. And there He found a large crowd of His followers, and a great mob of people from every part of Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the cities of Tyre and Sidon along the sea coast. ¹⁸They had come to hear what Jesus had to say, and to be healed from their diseases. And even those who were troubled by evil spirits were made well. ¹⁹Everyone there was trying to touch Him, because His power was flowing out and making everyone well.

The Kind of Things Jesus Taught the People

²⁰Then finally Jesus raised His head and looked around at all His followers and said,

"The truly happy people are the poor,
because God's Kingdom belongs to you.

²¹ The truly happy people are those who are hungry,
because you will have all you can eat.

The truly happy people are those who are crying,
because you're going to be laughing.

²²You are the truly happy people when everyone hates you, when they won't have anything to do with you, and when they say nasty things about you and call you dirty names because of the Son of Man. ²³Be glad when that happens, and dance for joy, for you must remember that you will be fully repaid in heaven. You see, their forefathers did the very same things to the prophets.

²⁴"But how terrible it's going to be for you people who are rich, for you are now enjoying all the comfort you will ever have. ²⁵And how terrible it's going to

be for you people who are full, for you're going to be hungry. And how terrible it's going to be for you people who are laughing, for you're going to be sad and crying. ²⁶And how terrible it's going to be for you when everyone says nice things about you, for their forefathers said the same nice things about the false prophets.

²⁷"But I'm telling you people who are listening to me that you must love your enemies. Do good things for those who hate you. ²⁸Ask God to bless those people who are asking Him to curse you. Pray for those people who are doing bad things to you. ²⁹When someone hits you on one cheek, turn your head so that he can hit the other cheek also. And when someone takes away your long outer cloak, don't try to stop him from taking your shirt also. ³⁰Keep on giving to everyone who asks for something. And when someone takes away your things, don't ask him to give them back. ³¹In other words, you must do for others exactly what you want them to do for you.

³²"If you love those who love you, what special favor have you earned? After all, even the most sinful people love those who love them. ³³And if you do good things for those who do good things for you, what special favor have you earned? Even the most sinful people do that. ³⁴And if you lend money to those from whom you expect to get it all back, what special favor have you earned? Even the most sinful people lend money to other sinful people, so that they will get it all back again. ³⁵Instead, you must love your enemies and do good things for them. And you must lend money without expecting to get anything back. Then you will receive a rich reward, and you will be true sons of the one true God, for He is kind to the wicked, and those who never thank Him. ³⁶You must always feel sorry for those who need help, just as your Father does.

³⁷"You must stop judging other people; then others won't be judging you. You must stop condemning other people, and others won't be condemning you. You

must always forgive other people, and then others will forgive you. ³⁸You must always give to other people, and then others will give to you. They will give you good measure, squeezed full, packed together, heaped up and running over. You see, the measure you use for other people is the same measure they will use for you."

³⁹Then Jesus also gave them the following illustrations. "A blind man can never act as a guide for another blind man, can he? If he does, won't they both fall into the ditch?

⁴⁰"It isn't possible for a student to be greater than his teacher. But when he has finished his training, every student will be like his teacher.

⁴¹"And why do you keep looking at the little speck of dust in your brother's eye, but pay no attention to the big piece of wood in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your brother, 'My friend, let me take out that speck of dust which is in your eye,' while you never even notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? When you do that, you're just pretending to be able to help your brother. First take the big piece of wood out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the little speck of dust in your brother's eye.

⁴³"There's no such thing as a good tree producing rotten fruit, or a rotten tree producing good fruit. ⁴⁴So the fruit tells you what kind of a tree you have. You all know that people don't pick figs from thorn bushes, and they don't gather grapes from bramble bushes. ⁴⁵A good person brings forth something good out of all the good things stored up in his heart, and a wicked person brings forth something wicked out of all the wicked things stored up in his heart. After all, your mouth puts into words the thoughts that fill your heart.

⁴⁶"Why do you keep calling me, 'Lord', and then not do the things I tell you to do? ⁴⁷Every person who comes to me and listens to what I say, and does

what I tell him ⁴⁸is like a man who was building a house. He dug down deep and laid his foundation on the rock. Then when the river flooded, the waters smashed against that house. But they weren't strong enough to shake the house loose, because it had been built well. ⁴⁹But the person who listens to what I say, and doesn't do what I tell him is like a man who built his house on the ground, without any foundation. So when the waters of the river smashed against that house, it fell apart right away, and broke up into a thousand pieces."

Jesus Heals a Roman Captain's Slave

⁷ When Jesus finished telling the people all these things that He wanted them to know, He went back to Capernaum. ²And there was a Roman army captain there who had a very high-priced slave. And this slave was so sick that he was about ready to die. ³So when the captain heard about Jesus, he sent some of the officers of the meeting house to ask Jesus if He would come and make his slave well. ⁴And when they got there, they begged Jesus as hard as they could to help the captain. "The man You'll be helping really deserves Your help," they said. ⁵"He loves us Jews. In fact, he's the one who built our meeting house for us." ⁶And so Jesus went along with them.

He wasn't very far away from the house, when the captain sent some friends with a message - "Sir, don't go to all this trouble. After all, I'm not good enough to have You come into my house. ⁷That's why I didn't even think I was good enough to come to You. You just say the word, and my servant will have to get well. ⁸You see, I work here under higher officers, and I also have soldiers under me. And I say to this fellow, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another man, 'Come!' and he comes; and I tell my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

⁹When Jesus heard this, He was astonished at the man. And He turned to the crowd that was following Him and said, "I'm telling you that I have never found

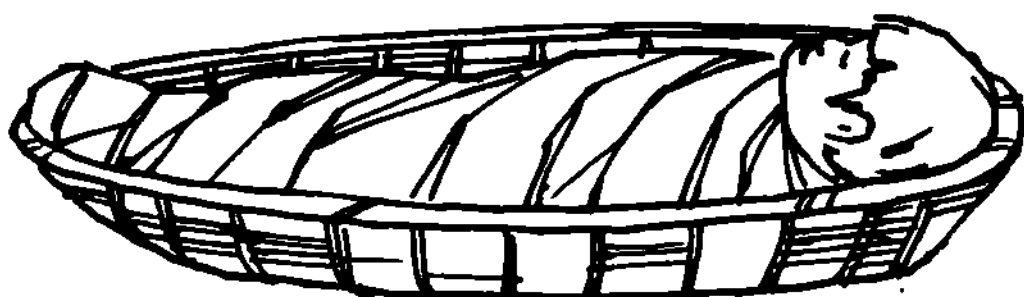
a faith like this in Israel." ¹⁰And when the messengers came back to the captain's house, they found the slave in perfect health.

Jesus Raises a Dead Man Back to Life

¹¹A few days later Jesus and His followers went to a city called Nain,* and a large crowd of people followed Him.

¹²Just as He came up to the city gate something wonderful happened. A dead man was being carried out of the city to be buried. His mother was a widow, and this was her only son, and there was a good sized crowd of people from the city with her. ¹³When the Lord saw the mother, He felt sorry for her, and He said to her, "Stop your crying!"

¹⁴Then He went over and put His hand on the wicker basket used to carry the dead body,* and the men



A FUNERAL BASKET

who were carrying it stood still. "Young man!" said Jesus, "I'm talking to you. Get up!" ¹⁵And the dead man sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus told his mother to take care of him.

¹⁶Everyone there was filled with fear, and they began to praise God. Some of them said, "The great prophet* has appeared in our land."

"Yes," said others, "God has come to help His people." ¹⁷So this story of what Jesus had done spread all over Judea and especially the area around Nain.

John the Baptist Sends His Men to Jesus

¹⁸The news about all these things was also brought to John the Baptist by his followers. So John called

two of his followers ¹⁹and sent them to the Lord with this question - "Are You really the One who is coming,* or should we be looking for some other man?"

²⁰And when the men arrived, they went to Jesus and said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask You if You really are the One who is coming, or if we should be looking for some other man."

²¹And while the two men were standing there, Jesus healed a lot of people, curing their diseases, taking away their pains, driving out evil spirits, and helping many blind people to see. ²²Then He said to the messengers, "Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard. Tell him that

'blind people are seeing again,
and cripples are walking around.
Lepers are being cleansed,
and deaf people are hearing again'.⁺
Dead people are being raised back to life,
'and the poor people are hearing the
Good News'.⁺

²³Then tell him that the person who doesn't stumble and lose his faith in me is a truly happy person".*

²⁴And when John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. "What did you go out into the desert to see?" He asked. "A thin little reed being bent this way and that way by the wind?

²⁵Of course not. But what did you go out to see? A man all dressed up in the finest clothes? You know very well that the people who wear beautiful clothes and have more than enough to eat are in palaces.

²⁶But what did you go to see? Was it a prophet? Yes indeed, and I'm telling you that you saw something more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the man the Bible is talking about where it says,

'Now hear this!

I'm sending out My messenger ahead of You.

He will get Your highway ready for You'.⁺

²⁸"I'm telling you that of all the people who have ever been or ever will be born in this world, there

is no one greater than John. And yet the least important person in God's Kingdom is greater than John.

29"And when all the people heard what John said, including even the tax collectors,* they asked John to baptize them. In this way they showed that they agreed that what God said was right. **30**But the Pharisees* and the scribes* weren't baptized by John. They didn't want to have anything to do with God's plan of salvation when it came to them.

31"So what are the Israelites who are living today like? **32**They're like little children sitting in the town square* and calling out to each other,

'We played wedding music for you,
but you didn't dance.

We sang funeral songs,
but you didn't cry.'

33"You see, John the Baptist is here, eating no food and drinking no wine, and you're saying, 'He has a demon inside of him.' **34**The Son of Man* is here, eating and drinking, and you're saying, 'Look at that man! He eats too much and drinks too much. He's a friend of tax collectors and sinful people.' **35**But the people who have been trained and brought up on God's Wisdom show us that it's the right kind of wisdom."

Jesus Eats Dinner at a Pharisee's House

36One day one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him. And so Jesus went to the man's house and took His place at the table.*

37And then something unusual happened. There was a woman in that town who had lived a very sinful life. And when she found out that Jesus was having dinner in the Pharisee's house, she brought a white stone jar of perfume to the house. **38**And suddenly there she was, standing behind Jesus at His feet, crying and sobbing. Her tears began to pour down on His feet, but she wiped them off with her hair. Then she began to cover His feet with kisses and poured the perfume on them.

39But when the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this, he said to himself, "If this fellow is a real prophet, he would know who this woman is who is touching him, and what sort of a woman she is. He would know that she's a very sinful woman."

40But Jesus answered his thoughts and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

And Simon answered, "Yes, Rabbi,* tell me what it is."

41And Jesus said, "There were two men who owed some money to a money-lender. One of them owed him five hundred dinars,* and the other one owed fifty."

42But since neither one of them was able to pay him back, the lender cancelled both debts out of the goodness of his heart. Now then, which one will love him the most?"

43"I suppose it would be the one who had the larger debt cancelled," answered Simon.

"You're absolutely right," said Jesus.

44Then Jesus turned and looked at the woman and said, "Simon, do you see this woman? When I came into your home today, you didn't give me any water to wash my feet; but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them off with her hair. **45**You didn't give me any kiss to greet me, but since the time I came into the house, this woman hasn't stopped covering my feet with kisses. **46**You didn't pour any oil on my head; but this woman has poured perfume on my feet. **47**And I'm telling you that it's because her many sins are forgiven that she has shown this great love. But the one who is forgiven only a little shows only a little love."

48Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49And then the men who were eating with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this fellow who even forgives sins?"*

50Jesus however went right on talking to the woman.

"Your faith has saved you," He said. "You can go, knowing that you have nothing to worry about or be afraid of".*

Jesus Finishes His Tour of Galilee

8 In the days that followed, Jesus kept on travelling around through the cities and villages, spreading the Good News about God's Kingdom and telling the people all about it. The twelve apostles went along with Him, **2**and also some women who had been healed from evil spirits and sicknesses. There was Mary who was called "the Magdalene",* from whom seven demons had been driven out, **3**and Joanna the wife of Chuza, who looked after Herod's business affairs, and Susanna, and many others. They used their own money to provide the food and the other things that Jesus and the apostles needed.

Jesus' Story about the Farmer

4One day a big crowd of people was gathering together to see Jesus, because people were coming from every city. And Jesus told them this story. **5**"A farmer went out to sow his seed. And as he was throwing the seed around, some of it fell along the edge of the road, where people walked all over it. And then the birds ate it up. **6**Other seeds fell among the rocks, and as soon as they sprouted, they dried up because they didn't have any water. **7**Other seeds fell in the middle of some thorn bushes, but when the thorns grew up faster than the seeds, they choked the little plants. **8**But other seeds fell into good soil, where they grew and produced a crop, each plant having a hundred kernels." And as He finished this story, He said, "Now think about what you have just heard!"

Jesus Explains the Story of the Farmer

9Later Jesus' followers asked Him what this story meant. **10**And He replied, "I have told you men all about the 'secrets' of God's Kingdom, but I use stories when I talk to the rest of the people. But

'even though they look, they won't see,

and even though they listen, they won't understand'.⁺

11"This is what the story means. The seed is God's Word. **12**And those seeds which fell on the edge of the road are a picture of people who hear the Word. But then the devil comes along and takes the Word out of their hearts, so that they won't believe it and be saved. **13**The seeds which fell among the rocks are a picture of people who receive the Word with great joy when they hear it. But these people are like plants which have no roots. They believe for a while, but when the time of testing comes, they lose their faith. **14**And that part of the seed which fell in the thorn bushes is a picture of people who hear the Word, but as they go along, their faith is choked and destroyed by worries and riches and pleasures of this life. So they never produce any fruit. **15**And that part which fell into the good soil is a picture of people who hear the Word and hold on to it in a good, clean heart, and keep on growing and producing fruit in spite of all their troubles.

The Purpose of a Lamp

16"No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl, or puts it under the bed. He puts it on the lampstand,* so that people can see the light when they come into the room. **17**The truth is that there is nothing hidden which won't come out into the open. And there isn't anything covered up which won't be found and come out into plain sight.

18"Therefore you must pay attention to the way you listen. Because if a person has something, he will get more. But if one has nothing, he will lose even what he thinks he has".*

Jesus Talks about His Family

19One day Jesus' mother and brothers came to see Him, but they weren't able to get near Him because of the crowd. **20**Finally someone told Him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside. They want

to see You."

21 Jesus answered, "These people who are listening to God's Word and doing what He says are my mother and my brothers."

Jesus Calms a Storm

22 One day Jesus and His followers got into a boat, and Jesus said to them, "Let's go across to the other side of the lake." So they sailed away.

23 But as they were sailing along, Jesus fell asleep. And then a big windstorm blew down on the lake, and the boat began to fill up with water, and they were in great danger.

24 So they all ran to Jesus and woke Him up. "Master!" they shouted, "Master! We're drowning!"

Then Jesus got up and told the wind and the big waves to quiet down. And they stopped, and everything became quiet and still. **25** Then Jesus said to His followers, "Where is your faith?"

But they were frightened and astonished. And they began to say to each other, "Who in the world is this? He even gives orders to the winds and the water, and they do what He says."

Jesus Heals a Man with Many Demons

26 Later they landed in the district of Gergesa, which is across the lake from Galilee. **27** And when Jesus stepped out of the boat onto the shore, a man from the city was there to meet Him. This man had some demons inside of him, and for quite a long time he hadn't worn any clothes. He wasn't living at home, but in the caves where they buried the dead. **28** When the man saw Jesus, he let out a yell and fell down at His feet* and shouted, "Jesus, You are the Son of the one true God! Why are You coming to see me? I beg You, please don't torture me!" **29** You see, Jesus had just given orders to the evil spirit to come out of the man. This demon had taken control of the man many times in the past. And he had been kept in prison,

tied up with chains on his hands and shackles* on his feet. But he would always break the chains, and then the demon would drive him out into the desert.

30 Then Jesus asked the demon, "What's your name?"

"My name is Legion",* he answered, because a whole lot of demons had gone inside of him. **31** And then they began to beg Jesus not to send them into the Hole which has no bottom.*

32 At that same time there was a good-sized herd of pigs feeding there on the hillside. So the demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs. And when Jesus said they could, **33** the demons went out of the man and into the pigs. And then the whole herd ran wildly over the edge of the cliff and down into the lake and drowned.

34 When the men who were taking care of the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and spread the news in the city and the surrounding farms.* **35** The people therefore went out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man who used to have the demons sitting at Jesus' feet. He was all dressed and in his right mind, and this frightened them. **36** Then the men who had seen what had happened told the others how the man who had been filled with the demons had been made well. **37** By this time almost everyone living around Gergesa was there, and they asked Jesus to go away, because they were really frightened. So Jesus got into the boat and started to leave.

38 But then the man who had been freed from the demons asked Jesus if he could go along with Him, but Jesus sent him away. **39** "Go back home," said Jesus, "and tell people about all the things God has done for you." So the man left and went all over town spreading the news about all the things Jesus had done for him.

A Bleeding Woman and a Dead Girl

40 When Jesus got back to Capernaum, a crowd of people was there to welcome Him, because everyone

was waiting for Him. ⁴¹And then a wonderful thing happened. A man named Jairus came to see Jesus. He was the president of the meeting house. But he fell down on the ground at Jesus' feet and begged Jesus to come to his home, ⁴²because his only daughter was dying. She was about twelve years old.

But while Jesus was going to Jairus' house, the people kept on crowding around Him on every side, so that He could hardly breathe. ⁴³In the crowd there was a woman who had been bleeding inside for twelve years, and no one had been able to make her well. ⁴⁴She came up to Jesus from behind and touched one of the little tassels on His long outer cloak,* and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵Then Jesus said, "Who touched me?"

And while everyone was saying, "I didn't," Peter said, "Master, there are lots of people crowding all around You and pushing up against You."

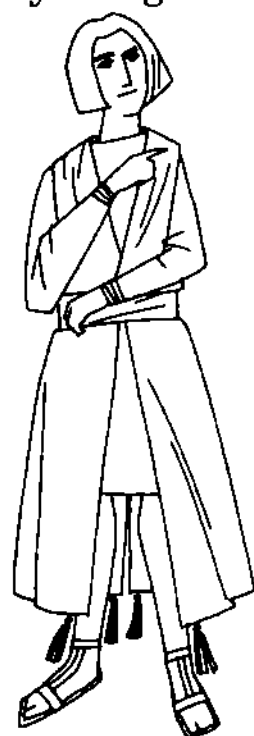
⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Some person touched me, for I could feel the power going out of me."

⁴⁷So when the woman saw that Jesus knew what she had done, she came to Him and fell down in front of Him, trembling with fear. And she told Him, right in front of all the people, why she had touched Him and how she had been healed immediately.

⁴⁸And Jesus said to her, "Young lady, your faith has made you well. You can go, knowing that you have nothing to be afraid of or worry about."

⁴⁹Jesus was still talking to her when a man came from the president's house and said to Jairus, "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the Teacher any longer."

⁵⁰When Jesus heard that, He said to Jairus, "You mustn't be afraid. The one thing you must do is believe, and she will get well."



TASSELS ON
A CLOAK

51 And when Jesus got to the house, He didn't allow anyone to go in with Him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. **52** Everyone was crying and moaning and pounding on their chests in grief because of what had happened to the child. "Stop your crying," said Jesus. "The girl hasn't died. She's sleeping".*

53 Then the people began to laugh at Him, because they knew that she had died. **54** But Jesus took hold of the girl's hand and said to her, "Get up, child!" **55** And her spirit came back, and she got up immediately. Then Jesus ordered them to give her something to eat.

56 Her parents were astonished, but Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Jesus Sends Out His Twelve Apostles

9 One day Jesus called His twelve apostles* together and gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and cure all diseases. **2** Then He sent them out to spread the news about God's Kingdom and heal the sick. **3** He told them, "Don't take anything along for your trip, no walking stick, no travelling bag, no food, no money, not even two shirts. **4** When you go to stay in some house, keep on staying there until you leave that town. **5** And whenever the people won't give you a friendly welcome, leave that town. And as you're leaving, shake their dust off your feet* as a warning to them." **6** So the twelve left and went through all the villages in that part of the country, spreading the Good News and healing people everywhere they went.

What Herod Thought of Jesus

7 Soon Governor Herod* heard about all the things that were going on, but he didn't know what to think about it. You see, some people were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead." **8** Others were saying, "Elijah has appeared".* And still others were saying, "Some one of the old prophets has come

back to life."

⁹But Herod said, "I cut off John's head myself. But who is this fellow that I'm hearing such things about?" So Herod kept on trying to find some way to see Jesus.*

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand Men

Spring, 28

¹⁰When the apostles came back, they told Jesus about all the things they had done. Then Jesus took them along with Him and went to a city called Bethsaida, where they could be alone. ¹¹But when the crowds found out about this, they all followed Him. And Jesus made them welcome, and began to talk to them about God's Kingdom. He also healed those who needed it.

¹²But when the sun began to get low in the sky, the twelve came to Jesus and said to Him, "Tell the crowds to leave, so that they can go into the villages and farms around here and find a place to stay and something to eat, because there are no people living out here."

¹³But Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

"We don't have more than five little loaves of bread* and two fish," they replied. "Surely You don't mean that we should go and buy food for this whole crowd?"

¹⁴You see, there were about five thousand men there.

Jesus answered, "Tell them to stretch out on the ground in groups of about fifty each."

¹⁵So they did what He said, and all the people stretched out. ¹⁶Then Jesus took the five little loaves of bread and the two fish and looked up to heaven, and asked God to bless them. And then He broke them into pieces, and kept on giving the pieces to the apostles to serve to the crowd. ¹⁷And they all ate until they were full.

And afterwards they picked up twelve big baskets of broken pieces that were left over.

What the People were Saying about Jesus

18One day while Jesus and His followers were alone, He was praying. And then He asked them, "Who do the people say I am?"

19And they answered, "Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah, and others are saying that some one of the old prophets has come back to life again."

20"But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?"

And Peter answered, "You are God's promised Savior".* **21**But then Jesus ordered them not to tell this to anyone.

Jesus Tells His Followers about His Death

22Later Jesus told them, "The Son of Man* has to go through a lot of suffering. The members of the Council,* the head priests,* and the scribes* will not accept Him as the promised Savior. And they will kill him, but on the third day he will be raised back to life."

Jesus Talks about Becoming His Follower

23Later Jesus was talking to all of His followers, and He told them, "If it's true that a person wants to become one of my students, he must forget about himself, and put his cross on his shoulders and carry it every day, and stay with me all the time. **24**You see, the person who wants to save his life will lose it, but the one who loses his life for my sake is the one who will save it. **25**After all, what does a person gain if he becomes the owner of the whole world, but loses or destroys his Life?

26"You see, if a person is ashamed of me and my teachings, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes with His holy angels and all His own and His Father's shining heavenly beauty. **27**But I'm telling you the truth when I say that some of the people who are standing here will never die until they see God's Kingdom".*

Jesus Shows His Followers His Heavenly Beauty

28About a week later Jesus took Peter, John and James along with Him and went up the mountain to pray. **29**And while He was praying His face changed so that it looked completely different, and His clothes were all white and shining. **30**And then an amazing thing happened. Suddenly there were two men talking with Jesus. They were Moses and Elijah, **31**appearing in their shining heavenly beauty. And they were talking about Jesus' death, which He was going to bring about in Jerusalem to make what God had written in the Bible come true.

32At first Peter and his friends were asleep. But then they woke up and saw Jesus' shining heavenly beauty, and the two men standing there with Him. **33**And just as Moses and Elijah were leaving Jesus, Peter said to Him, "Master, it's wonderful for us to be here. Let's make three tents, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He really didn't know what he was saying.

34But while Peter was talking, a cloud suddenly appeared right over their heads, shading them from the sun, and the three men were frightened when the cloud closed in around them. **35**And then a voice came out of the cloud. "This is My Son," it said, "My special favorite. Listen to Him!" **36**But after the voice had spoken, they discovered that Jesus was alone.

The three apostles however kept quiet about all this. In the days that followed they didn't say anything to anyone about the things they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon inside of Him

37The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd of people came to meet Jesus. **38**And there was one man in the crowd who called out, "Rabbi,* I beg You to take a look at my son, because he's my only child. **39**And his problem is that there's a spirit which keeps on taking control of him. Suddenly the spirit will scream and throw the boy into a

convulsion, so that he rolls around on the ground and foams at the mouth.* And when the spirit is attacking him, there's hardly anything that will make it leave. **40** I begged Your followers to drive it out, but they couldn't do it."

41 Jesus answered, "You Israelites of today have no faith at all, and you're not living the way God wants you to live. How long do I have to be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here!"

42 But as the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground so that he rolled around and foamed at the mouth. So Jesus told the evil spirit to behave himself, and then He healed the boy and gave him back to his father. **43** And everyone there was completely amazed at how great God was.

Jesus again Talks about His Death

But while all the people were marveling at all the things Jesus was doing, He said to His followers, **44** "You men must listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you. You see, the Son of Man is going to be given over into the hands of sinful men." **45** But they didn't know what He was talking about. The meaning was hidden from them, so that they couldn't understand it, and they were afraid to ask Him about it.

Who is the Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?

46 One day the twelve apostles were talking about which one of them was the greatest.

47 And since Jesus knew what they were thinking, He took a little child and stood him at His side, **48** and said to them, "Anyone of my followers who is a friend to this little child, is my friend, and anyone who is my friend is a friend of the One who sent me. You see, the littlest person in your whole group is the great one."

People Must Either be For Us or Against Us

49 Then John spoke up and said, "Master, we saw a man driving out demons by using Your name, and

we tried to stop him, because he isn't one of our group."

50 But Jesus said to him, "Don't try to stop him, because anyone who isn't against you is on your side."

Jesus Begins His Last Trip to Jerusalem Fall, 28

51 Then it was getting close to the time when Jesus would be taken back into heaven, so He made up His mind to go to Jerusalem. **52** But first He sent messengers out ahead of Him, who started out and went to a village in Samaria to get things ready for Him. **53** But when Jesus got there, the people didn't give Him a friendly welcome, because He was on His way to Jerusalem.

54 And when Jesus' followers James and John saw this, they said to Him, "Lord, do You want us to 'ask God to send down fire from heaven and destroy'⁺ these people?"

55 But Jesus turned around and scolded them for saying this. **56** And then they went on to another village.

About Becoming One of Jesus' Followers

57 As they were walking along the road, a man said to Jesus, "I want to live with You as one of Your students* wherever You go."

58 But Jesus answered, "Foxes live in holes in the ground, and the birds have nests; but the Son of Man has no place to lie down and rest."

59 And once Jesus said to another man, "Come and live with me as one of my students!"

But the man replied, "First let me go and bury my father."

60 And Jesus answered, "You must let the dead bury their own dead. But you must go and spread the news about God's Kingdom."

61 And there was another man who said to Jesus, "Lord, I want to live with You as one of Your students. But first let me say good-bye to my family."

62 And Jesus replied, "No person is of any use in God's Kingdom who takes hold of the plow and keeps on looking backwards."

Jesus Sends out More Followers

10 Then the Lord picked out seventy two other men and sent them out ahead of Him, two by two, into every city and place where He was planning to go. **2**"There's a lot of grain to be gathered in," He told them, "but only a few workers. Therefore you must ask the one who is in charge of the harvest to send out more workers to gather in the grain. **3**Get going! And remember that I'm sending you out like lambs who will be surrounded by wolves. **4**Don't take any purse or travelling bag or extra sandals. And don't stop to visit with anyone on the road.

5"When you go into a house, first of all tell them, 'We're bringing the Lord's peace to this house'.* **6**And if a man who loves peace* lives there, your prayer for God's peace will stay on that house; but if not, you must take back your prayer for peace. **7**But always keep on staying in that same house, eating and drinking what they give you, for the worker must be paid for his work. Don't be moving around from one house to another.

8"And when you come to a city where the people give you a friendly welcome, eat whatever they put in front of you. **9**Heal their sick, and tell them, 'God's Kingdom is here in your town!' **10**But when you come to a city where the people don't give you a friendly welcome, go out into the streets and say, **11**'We're wiping off even the dust of your city that sticks to our feet* as a warning to you. But remember this—God's Kingdom is here!' **12**I'm telling you that it will be a lot better for Sodom on Judgment Day than for that city!

Jesus Condemns the Cities of Galilee

13"Chorazin,* how terrible it's going to be for you! And Bethsaida,* how terrible it's going to be for you! For if the miracles which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, the people there would long ago have been sitting in mourning clothes, with

their heads covered with ashes, showing that they had changed their minds and their way of living. ¹⁴Yes, it will be a lot better for Tyre* and Sidon* on Judgment Day than for you.

¹⁵"And you, Capernaum,

you don't really think that 'you will be
lifted up to heaven,' do you?

No indeed, 'you will be brought down to hell'.⁺

¹⁶"When someone listens to you, he's listening to me. And the person who pays no attention to what you're saying, is paying no attention to what I'm saying. And the person who pays no attention to what I'm saying, is paying no attention to what the One who sent me is saying."

Jesus Talks to His Followers When They Return

¹⁷Later the seventy-two came back filled with joy. "Lord," they said, "even the demons are doing what we say when we speak to them using Your name and authority."

¹⁸Jesus replied, "I was watching Satan when he fell like lightning out of heaven. ¹⁹Remember that I have given you the authority to trample on poisonous snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the power of the enemy, so that nothing will ever hurt you. ²⁰But stop being so happy because the spirits are doing what you say. Be happy because your names are written in heaven."

²¹At that same time the Holy Spirit filled Jesus' heart with joy. "O Father," He said, "Lord of heaven and earth, I'm praising You because You have hidden things like this from those who are wise and educated, and have explained them to the little children. Yes, Father, I'm praising You because it made You happy to do things this way."

²²"My Father has handed everything over to me. No one knows who the Son is except His Father, and no one knows who the Father is except His Son, and anyone with whom the Son wants to share His knowledge."

23Then Jesus turned to His followers when they were alone and said to them, "People who see the things you are seeing are truly happy people. **24**For I'm telling you that many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you are seeing, but never saw them. And they wanted to hear the things you are hearing, but never heard them."

The Story about the Good Samaritan

25One day an interesting thing happened. A scribe stood up and asked Jesus a question, trying to get Him to say something wrong. "Rabbi", he said, "what must I do to receive eternal Life as God's child and heir?"*

26Jesus answered, "What is written in the Law? How do you understand it?"

27The man replied, " 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind'.⁺ And 'you must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself'.⁺"

28"You're right," said Jesus. "Do this, and you will live."

29But then the man wanted to prove that he had kept the Law perfectly. So he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30Jesus answered, "A man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers. They ripped off his clothes and beat him up and then ran off, leaving him half dead.

31"And it just happened that a priest was going down that same road. But when he saw the wounded man, he crossed over to the other side of the road and walked right on by him. **32**Later the same thing happened again. A Levite came to that same place and saw the man lying there, and walked right on by him on the other side of the road.

33"Next came a Samaritan* who was travelling on that road. But when he came to the man and looked at him, he felt sorry for him. **34**So he went over to

him and poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them up. Then he hoisted him up on his donkey and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35"The next day he took out two dinars* and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Take care of this man,' he said, 'and if you spend any more than this, I'll pay you back when I come back again.'

36"Now then, which one of these three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?"

37The scribe answered, "The one who had mercy on him."

So Jesus said to him, "You must also go and do the same thing every time you can!"

Jesus Visits His Friends, Martha and Mary

38On their way to Jerusalem Jesus and His followers came to a village where a woman by the name of Martha invited Jesus into her home. **39**She also had a sister named Mary, who sat down right at the Lord's feet and listened to everything He said. **40**Martha however was at her wits' end because there was so much work to get the dinner ready. So after a while she came to Jesus and said, "Lord, don't You care that my sister has left me all alone to do the work? Tell her to get busy and help me!"

41And the Lord answered, "My dear Martha, you're worried and upset about a lot of things. **42**But there's only one thing a person really needs. And the truth is that Mary has chosen that one best thing which will never be taken away from her."

Jesus Talks about Prayer

11 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. And when He finished, one of his followers said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, like John taught his followers."

2Jesus answered, "When you're praying, you must say,

'Father, Your name must be kept holy.

Your Kingdom must come.

3 Keep on giving us each day
the food we need for the next day.

4 And forgive us our sins,
for we also try to forgive everyone who
does bad things to us.

And don't let us be led into temptation'."

5 Then He added, "Suppose one of you has a friend,
and you were to go to him in the middle of the night
and say to him, 'My friend, lend me three little loaves
of bread.* 6 A friend of mine from out of town has
stopped to see me, and I don't have anything to give
him to eat.'

7 "And suppose your friend should answer, 'Don't
bother me! The door is already locked, and my children
and I are in bed. I can't get up now and give you
anything.'

8 "I'm telling you that even if he wouldn't get up
and give you what you want because he's your friend,
he would get up and give you everything you need
if you didn't care how much you bothered him and
kept on asking.

9 "So I'm telling you, keep on asking, and you'll get
what you ask for. Keep on searching, and you'll find
what you're looking for. Keep on knocking, and the
door will be opened for you. 10 For everyone who keeps
on asking gets what he asks for, and everyone who
keeps on searching finds what he's looking for, and
the door is opened for everyone who keeps on knocking.

11 "Suppose one of you fathers had a son who asked
you for a fish. Which one of you would give him a
rattlesnake instead of a fish? 12 Or which one of you
would give him a scorpion, if he asked you for an egg?

13 "So if you wicked people know how to give good
things to your children, how much more certain we
can be that our heavenly Father will give His Holy
Spirit to those who ask Him."

Jesus is Accused of Working for the Devil

14One day Jesus was driving out a demon which was making a man unable to talk. And when the demon was gone, the man began to speak; and the crowds were astonished. **15**But some of the people said, "He's driving out demons by the power of Beelzebul,* the ruler of the demons."

16Others were asking Him to have God do a special miracle to show that God had sent Him. They were testing Him to see if He was a genuine prophet.

17Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking. So He said to them, "Every kingdom which is divided into opposing groups is destroyed, and a family which is divided into opposing groups falls apart. **18**So if it's true that Satan's kingdom is divided into opposing groups, how can his kingdom last? And this must be true if, as you say, I'm driving out demons by Beelzebul's power. **19**But if it's true that I'm driving out demons by Beelzebul's power, what about your followers? By whose power are they driving them out? Therefore even they will say that you're wrong. **20**But if it's true that I'm driving out demons by God's power, then God's Kingdom has come to you.

21"When a strong man is fully armed and guarding his house, his belongings are safe. **22**But when a stronger man attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away all the strong man's weapons and equipment on which he depended, and divides up his property among his soldiers.

23"The person who isn't with me is against me, and the one who doesn't help me gather is really scattering.

24"When an evil spirit leaves a person, he wanders around through the waterless desert, looking for a place to rest. But if he doesn't find one, he says to himself, 'I'll go back to my house which I left.' **25**And when he gets there, he finds it all cleaned up and put in perfect order. **26**Then he goes and gets seven other spirits who are more wicked than himself, and they

all go in and live there. So in the end that person is much worse off than he was at first."

27While Jesus was talking, one of the women in the crowd called out, "The woman who brought You into the world and nursed You is a truly happy woman."

28And Jesus replied, "It would be better to say that the truly happy people are those who hear God's Word and do what it says."

Jesus Scolds the Israelites of His Day

29Now the people were crowding around Jesus, so He began to speak to them. "The Israelites who are living today are a wicked group of people," He said. "They're looking for some special miracle to show that God has sent me. But the only miracle that will be given to them is the miracle of Jonah. **30**You see, the Son of Man* will be a miracle to the Israelites who are living today in exactly the same way that Jonah was a miracle to the people of Nineveh.

31"On Judgment Day the queen of the south* will be raised back to life to be judged with the Israelites who are living today. But she will condemn you, because she travelled for a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom. But I'm telling you that there is someone much greater than Solomon here now.

32"On Judgment Day the people of Nineveh will rise back to life to be judged with the Israelites who are living today. But they will condemn you, because they changed their minds and their way of living when they heard Jonah's message. But I'm telling you that there is someone much greater than Jonah here now.

The Light of the Body

33"No one lights a lamp* and then puts it in the closet.* He puts it on the lampstand, so that people can see the light when they come into the room.

34"Your eyes serve as lamps for your body. So when you have good eyes, your whole body is full of light;

but when your eyes are bad, your whole body is in darkness.

35"You must watch out therefore, so that your inner light isn't turned off. **36**For if your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be bright all over, just as when a lamp lights you all up with its bright beams."

Jesus Scolds the Pharisees

37While Jesus was talking, one of the Pharisees* asked Him to have breakfast with him. So Jesus went to the man's house and took His place at the table.*

38When the Pharisee saw this, he was astonished, because Jesus hadn't washed His hands before breakfast.

39So the Lord said to him, "You Pharisees are always busy cleaning up the outside of your cups and plates, but your hearts are full of hatred and wickedness.

40You fools! Didn't the Creator of the outside also make the inside? **41**Therefore you should give what is in the cups and on the plates to the poor, and just like magic everything will be clean for you.

42"But how terrible it's going to be for you Pharisees. Because you keep on paying God the tenth of your mint and garlic and every garden vegetable, but you fail to do what is right for others, and you have no love for God. These are the things you should be doing without forgetting about those other things.

43"How terrible it's going to be for you Pharisees, because you love to have the special chairs in the meeting houses,* and to have others treat you as important people in the town squares.* **44**How terrible it's going to be for you, because you're like unmarked graves* which people walk over without knowing it."

45Then one of the scribes* who was there said to Jesus, "Rabbi,* when you say things like this, you're also insulting us."

46"Yes," said Jesus, "how terrible it's going to be for you scribes also, because you pile heavy loads on other people which they can hardly carry, but you

yourselves won't lift a finger to help them carry those loads.

47"How terrible it's going to be for you, because you keep on building memorial tombs for the prophets, the same prophets your forefathers murdered. **48**By doing this you're acting as supporting witnesses to what your forefathers did, showing that you think what they did was right, because they killed the prophets, and you're building the memorials. **49**This is why God's wisdom says,

'I will send them prophets and apostles;
and they will kill some of them,
and hunt others down like animals.

50 I will do this, so that the Israelites who are living today will be held responsible for the murders of all the prophets who have been killed ever since the world was created,

51 from the murder of Abel⁺ to the murder of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the Temple'.⁺

Yes, I'm telling you that the Israelites who are living today will be held responsible for them all.

52"And how terrible it's going to be for you scribes, because you have taken away the key that opens the door to knowledge. You yourselves haven't gone in, and you have stopped those who are trying to get in."

53Then Jesus left the house; and from that time on the scribes and Pharisees hated Him terribly and kept on asking Him questions about all sorts of things.

54This was their way of laying a trap for Him, trying to catch Him saying something wrong.

Jesus Talks about Pretending

12 After the breakfast a crowd of many thousand people gathered together. There were so many people that they were knocking each other down and trampling on one another. And Jesus began to talk

to His followers. "First and most important," He said, "watch out that you don't pretend to be something you aren't, because that is hypocrisy, the way the Pharisees act, and it spreads and grows so very rapidly, like yeast. ²Remember that there is nothing covered up which won't be uncovered, and nothing hidden which won't be made known. ³This means that whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in broad daylight, and whatever you have whispered in someone's ear in a closed room will be shouted from the housetops.

Whom We should be Afraid of

⁴"And I'm telling you people who are my friends that you mustn't be afraid of those who kill the body, but have nothing more that they can do after that. ⁵However I'll show you someone you should be afraid of. Be afraid of the one who has the authority to throw you into hell after He kills you. Yes sir, I'm telling you that you must be afraid of Him!

⁶"Isn't it true that five sparrows are sold for two assars?* Yet God always keeps a watchful eye on



AN ASSAR OF
AUGUSTUS



U.S.
PENNY

every one of them. ⁷But even the hairs on your head are all numbered. So you mustn't be afraid. You are worth a lot more than many sparrows.

Loyal and Disloyal Followers

⁸"I'm telling you that if a person tells other people that I'm his Lord, the Son of Man will tell all of God's angels, 'That person is my follower.' ⁹But if a person tells other people that he doesn't want anything to do with me, I will tell all of God's angels that I don't want anything to do with him.

10"Everyone who says something bad about the Son of Man will be forgiven; but there is no forgiveness for the one who says insulting things about the Holy Spirit.

11"And when they bring you into their local courts, or before their rulers and authorities, don't worry about how you're going to defend yourself or what you're going to say. **12**You see, when that time comes the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say."

The Story about the Rich Fool

13Then someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Rabbi, tell my brother to give me my share of the property our father left us."

14Jesus answered, "My friend, who has appointed me to be the judge or referee in your affairs?"

15Then He said to the crowd, "Watch out, and be on your guard against greed of any kind, because a person's Life is not just having a lot of money and things."

16Then Jesus told them a story. "There was a rich man whose land produced one good crop after another. **17**So the man kept on thinking to himself, 'What am I going to do? I don't have enough room to store all my crops.'

18"Finally he decided, 'This is what I'm going to do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I'll store all my grain and my other goods.' **19**And then I'll say to myself, 'Now my friend, you have enough good things stored away to last for many years. Take life easy! Eat and drink and have a good time!'"*

20"But then God said to him, 'You fool! Tonight you're going to lose your life. And what about all these things you have saved up? Who will they belong to now?'

21"That's the way it is with the person who lays away earthly treasures for himself, but is not rich in the things that have to do with God."

Jesus Warns against Worrying

22Then Jesus said to His followers, "This is why I'm telling you that you must stop worrying about what you're going to eat to stay alive, or what kind of clothes you're going to put on your bodies. **23**After all, there is more to life than food, and more important things for the body than clothes.

24"Look at those crows. And remember that they don't plant any seeds, they don't gather in any harvest, and they don't have any storage bins or barns. But God keeps on feeding them. Think how much more you are worth than those birds!

25"And which one of you can add one hour to his lifetime by worrying? **26**Therefore since you're not able to do even the smallest thing, why worry about the other things?

27"Look at those wild lilies and how they're growing. They don't spin any thread or weave any cloth. But I'm telling you that even Solomon, with all his riches and beautiful clothes, was never dressed up like one of those little flowers. **28**This is the way God provides clothing for the grass and flowers which grow in the fields, things which are alive today and are burned in the oven tomorrow. Think how much more concerned He's going to be about clothing you! Your faith is so small!

29"So your main interest in life mustn't be what you're going to eat and drink. And you mustn't be worrying about such things. **30**After all, these are all the things which the people of the other nations* are always chasing after. But your Father knows that you need these things. **31**Instead, your main interest in life must always be God's Kingdom, and He will supply you with these things.

32"You mustn't be afraid, my little flock, because your Father is happy to make you members of His Kingdom. **33**Sell your belongings, and give the money to the poor. Make purses for yourselves that never wear out, filled with a treasure which will never be

used up. Store it up in heaven, where thieves can't get at it and moths can't destroy it. ³⁴And remember that your heart will always be where your treasure is.*

Jesus Wants Watchful and Faithful Servants

³⁵"You must always be dressed for action, with the ends of your long cloaks tucked up under your belts, so that you can move quickly. And you must always have your lamps* burning. ³⁶Yes, you must be like slaves who are waiting for their master to come back from a wedding, but not knowing exactly when he will leave the party to go home. Therefore they are right there waiting, so that as soon as the master arrives and knocks on the door, they can open the door for him right away.



BELTED UP
READY FOR ACTION

³⁷"Those slaves are truly happy men if their master finds them awake and on the job when he comes home. I'm telling you the truth when I say that he will dress himself for work, and have them take their places at the table.* And then he will bring the dinner in and serve it to them. ³⁸Yes, they will be truly happy men, especially if their master comes home at midnight, or early in the morning, and finds them awake and on the job.

³⁹"You also know that no homeowner would ever let his house be broken into if he knew that a thief was coming at a certain time. ⁴⁰So you people must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at a time when you aren't expecting Him."

Faithful and Unfaithful Managers

⁴¹Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, are You telling this story just to us or to everybody?"

⁴²And the Lord answered, "What kind of a man does

a master appoint as manager over his household, to give out the food at the proper time? Doesn't he pick a man who is faithful and wise? ⁴³And that slave is a truly happy man if his master comes home and finds him doing his job faithfully. ⁴⁴I'm telling you the truth when I say that his master will put that man in charge of all his property.

⁴⁵"But suppose that slave says to himself, 'It's going to be a long time before my master comes back.' And suppose he then begins to beat the other servants, both the men and the women, and spends his time eating and drinking and getting drunk. ⁴⁶If that happens, the master of that slave will arrive back home on a day when he isn't expecting him, and at a time he doesn't know about. And then his master will cut him in two. And on Judgment Day he will be punished as one of those people who can't be trusted.

⁴⁷"So that slave who knows what his master wants, but isn't ready for his master's return, or doesn't do what his master wants, will get a bad beating. ⁴⁸But the slave who doesn't know what his master wants, but still does things which deserve a beating, will get only a light beating.

"Remember, one always expects a lot from the person who has been given a lot, and one always asks a lot more from the person who has been given a lot to take care of.

Jesus is a Cause of Division

⁴⁹"I have come to set the world on fire, and what more can I want, since it has already been done? ⁵⁰But I must go through a time of great suffering, and I'm under a terrible pressure until it's over.

⁵¹"Do you think that I came to bring peace to the world? No, indeed! I'm telling you that I came to divide the world. ⁵²The truth is that from now on a family of five will be divided, three against two, and two against three. ⁵³They will be divided, father against son, and 'son against father,'

mother against her daughter, and 'daughter
against her mother,'
a man's mother against his wife,
and 'a man's wife against his mother'."⁺

Signs of the Times

54Then Jesus said to the crowds. "When you see a cloud coming up in the west, right away you say, 'It's going to rain,' and that's what happens. **55**And when a south wind is blowing, you say, 'It's going to get hot,' and it does. **56**You people are hypocrites, just pretending to be God's people. You can look at what's happening on the earth or in the sky and tell what the weather will be. Why then can't you look at what's happening right now and tell what it means?

Jesus Talks about Settling Our Disputes

57"And why can't you also decide for yourselves what's the right thing to do? **58**For example, when you're going to court with someone who has accused you of doing something wrong, make every effort to settle the matter before you get to court. If you don't, your accuser will drag you before the judge,* and the judge will hand you over to the sheriff, and the sheriff will throw you in jail. **59**And I'm telling you that you will never get out of there until you pay the very last penny of your fine."

We Must All Change Our Minds and Lives

13 Some of the people who were there at that time were telling Jesus about the people from Galilee whom Pilate had killed while they were offering their sacrifices to God. **2**Jesus answered, "Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people in Galilee because they suffered like this? **3**Of course not. But I'm telling you that if you don't change your minds and your way of living, you will all be destroyed just as they were. **4**Or, what about those eighteen people at Siloam who were killed when the tower fell on them? Do you think they were worse

sinners than all the other people living in Jerusalem?
⁵Of course not. But I'm telling you that if you don't change your minds and your way of living, you will all be destroyed just as they were."

⁶Then Jesus told them this story. "There was a man who had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. One day he came looking for some figs on it, but he didn't find any. ⁷So he said to his gardener, 'Listen to me! For three years I have been coming here looking for fruit on this fig tree, but I never find any. Cut it down! Why are we letting it use up this piece of land?'

⁸" 'Sir,' answered the gardener, 'leave it here for just one more year. That will give me time to dig around it and throw on some manure. ⁹And if it produces figs next year, we'll all be happy; but if it doesn't, you'll have to cut it down'."

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

¹⁰One Saturday Jesus was explaining the Bible* to the people in one of the meeting houses* ¹¹when a wonderful thing happened. There was a woman there who had an evil spirit which had made her a cripple for eighteen years. She was all bent over and wasn't able to straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, He called her over to Him and said to her, "My dear, you're free from your crippled condition." ¹³Then He placed His hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began to praise God.

¹⁴Right away the president of the meeting house spoke up. He was upset and angry because Jesus had made her well on the day of rest. And he said to the crowd, "There are six workdays every week. You can come on any one of those days and be made well, but not on Saturday."

¹⁵The Lord answered, "You people are just pretending to be God's people. Is there a single one of you who doesn't untie his ox or his mule and take it out of its stall on Saturday to give it some water? ¹⁶But Satan has kept this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham

all tied up for eighteen long years! Didn't she have to be set free from this thing which tied her up on this day of rest?" ¹⁷And as Jesus was talking, all His enemies felt ashamed of themselves. But the whole crowd of people were filled with joy by all the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

Two Little Stories about God's Kingdom

¹⁸And then Jesus said to them, "What is God's Kingdom like? What can I compare it with? ¹⁹It's like a mustard seed which a man takes and plants in his garden. It grows and becomes a tree, and the birds build their nests in its branches."

²⁰And then He gave a second illustration. "What shall I compare God's Kingdom with? ²¹It's like yeast which a woman takes and mixes into three big lumps of dough. And soon the whole batch is full of yeast."

How Many will be Saved?

²²So Jesus kept on travelling through all the cities and villages, explaining the Bible to the people and making His way towards Jerusalem.

²³One day a man said to Him, "Lord, is it true that only a few people will be saved?"

²⁴Jesus answered, "You must fight as hard as you can to get in through the narrow door, because I'm telling you that many people will be trying to get in, but they won't be able to."

²⁵"You see, once the owner of the house gets up and locks the door, it's too late. Then you'll find yourself standing outside, and you'll begin to pound on the door and say, 'Lord, open up for us!'

"But His answer will be, 'I don't know you. Where do you come from?'

²⁶"Then you'll answer, 'We ate and drank at the same table with You. You explained the Bible to us in the streets of our town.'

²⁷"But He'll reply, 'I don't know where you come from. Get away from Me, you wicked people!'

28"So you'll be crying and sobbing and grinding your teeth together in pain, as you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets inside God's Kingdom, while you are thrown outside. **29**Yes, people will be coming 'from the east and the west, from the north and the south',⁺ to take their places at the table in God's Kingdom.

30"But remember this. Some people who are last now will then be first, and some people who are first now will then be last."

Jesus Speaks Again about His Death

31Just then some Pharisees came up to Jesus. "Get out of here!" they said. "Go somewhere 'else, because Herod wants to kill you."

32Jesus answered, "Go and give that clever fox this message - 'Listen to my answer! I'm going to be driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I'm going to finish my work. **33**But no matter what your plans are, I must keep on going today and tomorrow and the next day, because it isn't possible for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem.'

34"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you're the city which is always killing the prophets and stoning to death those whom God sends to you. How many times I have wanted to gather your people together, like a hen gathers her little chicks under her wings; but you wouldn't let me. **35**Now hear this! 'You're going to become an empty house'.⁺ And I'm telling you that you will never see me again until the time comes when you say, 'God's blessings on the one who is coming as the Lord's messenger'!"⁺

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

14 One Saturday* Jesus went to the home of one of the leading Pharisees* to have dinner, and the people who were there were watching Him carefully. **2**And suddenly there was a man standing right in front of Jesus whose arms and legs were swollen and filled with water.

³So Jesus said to the scribes* and Pharisees, "Does the Law allow us to make someone well on Saturday, or not?"

⁴And when they gave Him no answer, Jesus touched the man with His hand and made him well, and sent him home. ⁵Then He said to the Pharisees, "Suppose one of you has a son or an ox which falls into a well on Saturday. Is there a single one of you who wouldn't pull him out right away?" ⁶But they weren't able to give any answer to His questions.

Advice to the Guests and the Host

⁷Jesus was also noticing how the guests were choosing the places of honor* for themselves, so He told them this story. ⁸"When someone invites you to a wedding dinner, don't take the place of honor for yourself. It may be that the host has invited someone else who is more important than you. ⁹And if so, the host will come and say to you, 'You must give this place to this man.' Then you will be blushing with shame as you have to get up and take the lowest place at the table.

¹⁰"So you should do just the opposite. When you're invited, go and take the lowest place. Then when your host comes in, he will say to you, 'My friend, come up here to a better place,' and you will be honored in front of all the other guests.

¹¹"You see, the person who puts himself in a high place will be brought down to the lowest place, and the one who puts himself in the lowest place will be raised to a high place".*

¹²Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him, "When you're giving a breakfast or a dinner,* don't invite your friends, or your brothers and relatives, or your rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you to their house, and you'll be paid back for what you did. ¹³Instead, when you're giving a party, invite the poor people, those who are crippled and lame and blind. ¹⁴Then you will be truly happy, because these people

aren't able to pay you back. Therefore God will pay you back when the people who are perfectly holy in His sight* are raised back to Life from the dead."

The Story about the Big Dinner

15When one of the other guests heard this, he said to Jesus, "Anyone who will eat at God's table in His Kingdom will be truly happy."

16And Jesus replied, "There was a man who was getting ready to have a big dinner, and he had invited a lot of people. **17**So when everything was ready, he sent out one of his slaves to tell the people who had been invited, 'Come! Everything is ready now.'

18"But one after the other, they all began to make excuses. The first one said, 'I just bought a farm, and I have to go out and look at it. I must ask to be excused.'

19"Another one said, 'I just bought five pairs of oxen, and I'm just leaving to try them out. I must ask to be excused.'

20"Another one said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

21"When the slave got back, he reported all this to his master, who became terribly angry. And he said to the slave, 'Hurry up! Go out into the streets and alleys of the city, and bring in the poor people, those who are crippled and blind and lame.'

22"Soon the slave was back. 'Master,' he said, 'your orders are carried out, and there's still room for more.'

23"So the master said to him, 'Go out onto the highways and the little paths along the fences and make the people come in, so that my house will be full. **24**But I'm telling you that not a single one of those people who were first invited will ever get a bite of my dinner'."

The Cost of Following Jesus

25At this time great crowds of people were traveling along with Jesus. And one day He turned around

and said to them, **26**"No one can come to me and be my follower unless he cares nothing about his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters. And beside all this, he must care nothing about himself or his own life. **27**And no one can be my follower unless he carries his own cross and always walks right along behind me.

28"For example, suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first of all sit down and figure out how much it will cost, to see if you have enough to finish the job? **29**Because you don't want to get the foundation laid and then not be able to finish the job. If that happens, all the people who are watching you will begin to make fun of you. **30**'Look at this fellow,' they'll say. 'He started out to build something, but he wasn't able to finish it.'

31"Or suppose a king is going to start a war against another king. Won't he first of all sit down and think it over carefully to see if he and his ten thousand men are strong enough to face an enemy who will be attacking him with twenty thousand? **32**And if he isn't, he will send out his messengers to arrange a peace treaty while the enemy is still a long way off.

33"And so if you think about it in the same way, no one of you can be my follower if he isn't willing to give up all of his belongings.

34"Salt is a useful thing. But even salt can lose its flavor. And if it does, what is there that can make it salty again? **35**Saltless salt is no good for the ground. It's no good for the manure pile. People just throw it away. Now think about what you have just heard!"

The Story about the Lost Sheep

15 One day a lot of tax collectors* and people who had lived sinful lives were crowding around Jesus to listen to Him. **2**And the Pharisees* and the scribes* began to talk among themselves, sounding like a swarm of bees. They were saying, "This fellow chooses sinners for his friends. He's even eating with them!"*

3So Jesus told them this story. **4**"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine sheep out in the open pasture land and go after the one which is lost, and keep on looking until you find it? **5**And when you find it, you would be so happy that you would put it on your shoulders and carry it back home. **6**Then you would call together your friends and neighbors and tell them, 'Come and celebrate with me, because I have found that sheep of mine which was lost.'

7"I'm telling you that it will be just like that in heaven. There will be more joy there over one sinner who has changed his mind and his way of living than over ninety-nine perfectly holy people who don't have to change their minds and their way of living.

The Story about the Lost Coin

8"Or suppose a woman has ten drachmas,* and loses one of them. Wouldn't she light a lamp and sweep



DRACHMA
OF
ALEXANDER
THE GREAT



U.S.
PENNY

the house and look everywhere until she finds it? **9**And if she finds it, she will call together her friends and neighbors and tell them, 'Come and celebrate with me, because I have found that drachma I lost.'

10"I'm telling you that it's just like that in heaven. There is great joy among God's angels when one sinner changes his mind and his way of living."

The Story about the Lost Son

11Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. **12**One day the younger son said, 'Father, please give me my share of your property that you're going to leave me.' So the father divided up his property between the two sons.

13"And a few days later the younger son turned everything he owned into cash and left home. He

went far away into another country, and there he threw his money away, living wildly and recklessly.

14"Soon he had spent everything he had. And then a terrible famine spread all over that whole land, and he began to suffer, because he had nothing to eat and no place to live.

15"So he went and stayed with one of the citizens of that country, and the man sent him out to his farm to feed his pigs. **16**By now the young man began to wish that he could eat some of the bean pods the pigs were eating, but no one gave him any.

17"Finally he came to his senses. 'Think of all my father's hired men who have more than enough to eat,' he thought, 'and here I am dying of hunger. **18**I'll pack my things and go to my father, and I'll say to him, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. **19** I don't deserve to be called your son any longer. Give me a job as one of your hired men".'**20**So he left right away to go back to his father.

"But he was still a long way from home when his father saw him coming and felt sorry for him. And so he ran out to meet him and threw his arms around his neck and covered him with kisses.

21"Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I don't deserve to be called your son any longer . . .'

22"But the father said to his slaves, 'Quick! Bring out a robe, the best one we have, and put it on him. And give him a ring for his hand and some sandals for his feet. **23**Then bring the calf we have been fattening and kill it. We must have a big dinner and have a good time. **24**For this son of mine was dead, but now he has come back to life. He was lost, but now we have found him!' So the party began.

25"But while all this was going on, the man's older son was out in the fields. And when he got near the house on his way home, he heard the music and dancing. **26**So he called one of the servants and asked him what

was going on.

27 " 'Your brother is back,' the servant answered, 'and your father has killed the calf we have been fattening, because he has gotten him back safe and sound.'

28 "But the older brother became so angry that he wouldn't go into the house. So his father went out and begged him to come in.

29 "But the older brother said to his father, 'Look at all these years that I have been working for you like a slave. Never once have I disobeyed any of your orders. And never once have you given me a young goat, so that I could have a good time with my friends.'

30 "But when this son of yours comes back, this fellow who has wasted all your money living with prostitutes, you kill the calf we have been fattening for him.'

31 "But the father replied, 'Son, you're always here with me, and everything I have belongs to you. **32** But we had to celebrate and be happy, because this brother of yours was dead, but now he has come back to life. He was lost, but now we have found him!'

The Story about the Dishonest Manager

16 One day Jesus was talking to His followers, and He said, "There was once a rich man who had a manager to look after his property and business. But the owner was told that this manager was throwing his money away. **2** So he called the man in and said to him, 'What is this I have been hearing about you? Turn in your records, showing what you have done with my property, for you can't be my manager any longer.'

3 "Then the manager said to himself, 'Since my master is taking my job away from me, what am I going to do? I'm not strong enough to work with a shovel, and I'm ashamed to be a beggar.'

4 "But then he got an idea. 'I know what I'll do. I'll fix things so that when I'm fired from my job, there will be some people who will take me into their homes.'

5"So one by one he called in all those who owed his master any money. When the first one came in, the manager asked him, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6 " 'A hundred barrels of oil,' said the man.

"And the manager said, 'Here's your bill. Sit down, and quickly change it to fifty.'

7"Then he said to another one, 'And what about you? How much do you owe?'

" 'A thousand bushels of grain,' the man replied.

"And the manager said, 'Here's your bill. Change it to eight hundred.'

8"Later the master had to give the dishonest manager credit, because he had done a very smart thing. You see, the people of this world are much smarter than God's people* in dealing with each other.

9"So I'm telling you that you must use your earthly things, which are often used in dishonest ways, to make friends for yourselves, so that when those earthly things are gone, your new friends will be there to welcome you into their eternal homes.

10"The one who can be trusted in very small things can also be trusted in big things, and the one who is dishonest in very small things is also dishonest in big things.

11"Therefore if it's true that you haven't been faithful in handling the earthly things which are often used in dishonest ways, who will trust you with the real treasure? 12And if you haven't been faithful in managing that which belongs to someone else, who will give you anything you can call your own?

13"No servant can be the slave of two masters. You see, either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and care nothing about the other. You can't have both God and earthly 'things' as your masters."

14Some Pharisees had been listening to all this,

and they loved money. So now they began to turn up their nose at Jesus and make fun of Him.

15 Jesus therefore said to them, "You're the kind of people who are always trying to make others think that you're perfectly holy. But God knows what's in your hearts. I'm telling you this because often what people think is wonderful is so filthy and disgusting that God can't stand to look at it.

Jesus Talks about the Law

16 "Before John came, there was the Law and the prophets. And since then the people are hearing the Good News about God's Kingdom, and everyone is trying to force his way into it. **17** But it's easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for one dot of an i to be erased from the Law.

18 "Every man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is living with a woman who isn't his wife. And every man who marries a divorced woman is living with someone else's wife.

A Story about a Rich Man and a Beggar

19 "There was once a rich man who was always dressed in the most expensive clothing, made of purple cloth and fine linen. Every day he feasted and entertained himself in the most expensive way.

20 "And there was a poor beggar by the name of Lazarus who was always lying just outside the gate into the rich man's house. This beggar was covered with open sores, **21** and his one wish was to eat some of the food that was thrown out from the rich man's dinners. But the only ones who came to him were the wild dogs, who would stop and lick his sores.

22 "After a while the beggar died, and the angels carried him away to heaven, where he was Abraham's honored guest at the dinner there. And a little later the rich man also died and was buried.

23 "But the rich man found himself in hell, where he was suffering terribly. Then one day he looked

up and saw Abraham a long way off, and Lazarus there beside him. ²⁴'Father Abraham,' he shouted, 'have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I'm suffering the most awful pain in this fire.'

²⁵"But Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that while you were on earth you received the good things you wanted, while Lazarus got the bad things. But now he's living here in comfort while you are suffering.

²⁶And besides all this, there's a great canyon between us and you, so that those who want to go across from here to where you are can't do so, and people can't travel across from there to where we are either.'

²⁷"Then the rich man said, 'Father Abraham, since that's the way things are, I'm asking you to send Lazarus back to my father's family. ²⁸You see, I have five brothers, and I want Lazarus to warn them, so that they won't come to this place of torture too.'

²⁹"But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. They'll have to listen to them.'

³⁰"And the rich man answered, 'No, father Abraham, that's not enough. But if someone who is dead comes to them, they'll change their minds and their way of living.'

³¹"But Abraham replied, 'If they aren't listening to Moses and the prophets, they'll never be convinced, not even if someone rises back to life from the dead'."

Jesus Talks about His Kingdom

17 Jesus also said to His followers, "Things that will cause people to fall into sin and lose their faith are sure to come, but how terrible it's going to be for the person who does such things. ²It would be better for him if a big millstone was hung around his neck, and he was thrown into the ocean, than to be the one who causes one of these little ones* to fall into sin and lose his faith. ³So watch what you're doing!

"If your brother is sinning, tell him that he has done

wrong. And if he's sorry for his sin, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times a day, and then comes back to you seven times and says, 'I'm sorry,' you must forgive him."

⁵One day the apostles said to the Lord, "Make our faith greater."

⁶And Jesus replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to God, 'Pick this mulberry tree up, roots and all, and plant it in the ocean.' And God would do what you say."

A Slave's Duty

⁷"Suppose one of you has a slave who is plowing, or looking after the sheep. When he comes in from the field, would you tell him, 'Quick! Come in here and have your dinner'? ⁸Why, of course not. Instead, you'll say to him, 'Get something ready for me to eat! Then tuck your robe up under your belt* and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that, you can have your dinner.'"

⁹"You don't thank your slave, do you, because he does the things you have ordered him to do? ¹⁰It's the same with you. When you do everything God has ordered you to do, you must say, 'We're worthless slaves. We have only done what we had to do.'"

Jesus Heals Ten Lepers

¹¹One day while Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, He was travelling along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²And He was just coming into a little village when He met ten lepers.* They stood some distance away ¹³and called out to Him, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us!"

¹⁴Jesus looked at them and said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."* And while they were on their way, they were made clean.

¹⁵When one of the men saw that he had been healed, he went back. And as he returned, he was praising God so that everyone could hear him. ¹⁶He fell down

at Jesus' feet, with his forehead on the ground,* as he thanked Jesus. And this man was a Samaritan.

17 Jesus answered, "There were ten men made clean, weren't there? What about the other nine? Where are they? **18** Is this foreigner the only one who has come back to give glory and honor to God?"

19 Then He said to the man, "Get up and go! Your faith has made you well."

Jesus Talks about the End of the World

20 One day some Pharisees asked Jesus when God's Kingdom was going to come.

And He replied, "God's Kingdom doesn't come in such a way that people can see it. **21** So people won't be saying, 'Look! Here it is,' or 'There it is.' For you must understand that God's Kingdom is in your hearts."

22 Later Jesus said to His followers, "The time will come when you will wish that you could see the Son of Man* for just one day, but you won't get your wish. **23** And people will say to you, 'Look! There He is!' or 'Look! Here He is!' Don't run off and try to find Him. **24** You know how the lightning suddenly flashes across the sky and lights it up from one end to the other. The Son of Man's return will be just like that.

25 "But before that Day comes, the Son of Man must go through a lot of suffering, and the Israelites who are living today will say that they don't want anything to do with him.

26 "And when the Son of Man's time comes, it will be just like what happened at the time of Noah. **27** In those days the people were eating and drinking, marrying and being married, right up to the day when Noah went into his houseboat. And then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "And the same thing happened at the time of Lot. The people were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. **29** But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. **30** That's exactly how it will be on the Day*

when the Son of Man comes back so that everyone can see Him.

31"On that Day if a man is on the roof, and his belongings are in the house, he mustn't go back down to pick them up. And the man who is out in the field mustn't go back to get the things he has left behind. **32**Remember Lot's wife!

33"Anyone who tries to save his life will lose it, but anyone who loses his life will keep it forever.

34"I'm telling you that on that Night there will be two people in the same bed. One will be taken away, the other will be left behind. **35**There will be two women grinding grain at the same place. One will be taken away, the other will be left behind."

37Then His followers asked Jesus, "Where will this be, Lord?"

And He replied, "Where there's a dead body, there will also be a flock of vultures gathered around it."

A Story about a Dishonest Judge

18 Jesus also told His followers a story to teach them that they must always keep on praying and never get discouraged and give up. **2**He said, "There was a judge in a certain city who wasn't afraid of God and didn't care anything about other people. **3**There was also a widow in that city who kept on coming to this judge again and again, asking him, 'Please protect me from the man who is trying to take away my house'.*

4"For a long time the judge refused to do anything. But after a while he said to himself. 'I'm not afraid of God, and I don't care anything about other people. **5**But because this widow keeps on giving me so much trouble, I'm going to see to it that she is treated fairly. If I don't, she'll keep on coming, and finally she'll wear me out'."

6Then Jesus said to His followers, "Pay attention to what that dishonest judge said. **7**And then think about God. Don't you think that He will punish those

who mistreat His chosen people who call on Him day and night? Do you think He's going to be slow about helping them? ⁸I'm telling you that He'll do what's right for them, and He'll do it quickly. But when the Son of Man comes, will He find any believers in the world?"

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

⁹One day Jesus told this story to some people who were sure they were perfectly holy, and looked down on everyone else as though they didn't amount to anything at all. ¹⁰"Two men went up into the Temple-yard* to pray. One was a Pharisee,* and the other was a tax collector.*

¹¹"The Pharisee stood and prayed this 'prayer' - 'O God, I thank You that I'm not like everyone else. I'm not greedy or dishonest or living in sexual sins, like this tax collector. ¹²I always go without food* twice a week, and I always give You a tenth of all my income.'

¹³"But the tax collector stood some distance away, and wouldn't even look up to heaven. He kept pounding on his chest and saying, 'O God, have mercy on me. I'm a sinner.'

¹⁴"I'm telling you that this tax collector was perfectly holy in God's sight* when he went home, but the Pharisee was not. Because the person who puts himself in a high place will be brought down to the lowest place, but the one who puts himself in the lowest place will be raised to a high place".*

Jesus and the Little Children

¹⁵One day the people were even bringing their little babies to Jesus, so that He could touch them. And when His followers saw this, they began to scold the people. ¹⁶Jesus however invited them to come to Him. "You must let the children come to me!" He said. "Don't try to stop them. After all, God's Kingdom is made up of people just like them. ¹⁷I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who doesn't

receive the news about God's Kingdom like a little child does will never get into it at all."

Jesus Talks about Rich People

18One day an officer of a meeting house said to Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do so that I will receive eternal Life as God's child and heir?"*

19Jesus replied, "Why do you say that I'm good? God is the only one who is good. **20**You know the commandments. 'You must not have sex with anyone except your own husband or wife! You must not kill! You must not steal! You must not tell lies about other people! You must honor your father and mother!'"†

21The man answered, "I have kept all these commandments ever since I was a young man."

22When Jesus heard this, He said to the man, "There's still one thing you haven't done. Sell everything you have and give all the money to the poor, and you will have a great treasure in heaven.* Then come and live with me as one of my students!"*

23When the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.

24When Jesus saw how sad the man was, He said, "How hard it is for rich people to get into God's Kingdom. **25**You see, it's easier for a rope* to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to get into God's Kingdom."

26When the people heard this, they said, "Then who can be saved?"

27Jesus answered, "Things that are impossible for men are possible for God."

28Then Peter said to Jesus, "Look at us. We have given up everything we had, and have stayed with You as your students."

29And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that everyone who has given up his home or his wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of God's Kingdom, **30**will receive many times as much

in this present world, plus eternal Life in the world to come."

Jesus Again Talks about His Death

31Then Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and said to them, "Listen carefully. We're going up to Jerusalem, and everything that has been written through the prophets about the Son of Man* will come true.

32You see, He will be handed over to the people of the other nations,* and they will make fun of Him and insult Him and spit on Him. **33**Then they will whip Him and kill Him. But on the third day He will rise back to life again."

34But His followers didn't understand any of these things. What He said was a mystery to them, and they didn't know what He was talking about.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

35When Jesus was getting close to Jericho, there was a blind man sitting along the side of the road, begging. **36**And when he heard the crowd of people going by, he asked what was happening.

37"Jesus the Nazorite* is going by," they told him.

38Then the man began to shout, "Jesus! Son of David! Have pity on me!"

39The people who were walking along in front began to scold the man, telling him to be quiet, but he just yelled all the louder, "Son of David! Have pity on me!"

40Then Jesus stopped and gave orders that the man should be brought to Him. And when he was close enough, Jesus asked him, **41**"What do you want me to do for you?"

And the man answered, "Lord, I want to see again."

42Then Jesus said to him, "Open your eyes and see! Your faith has made you well."

43And immediately the man could see again. And he started to follow Jesus, praising God. And when the people saw what had happened, they all began to praise God.

Jesus Meets Zacchaeus

19 After Jesus got to Jericho, He was walking right through the town **2** when an interesting thing happened. There was a man by the name of Zacchaeus, who was the chief tax collector* of the district, and a very rich man. **3**He also wanted to get a look at Jesus and see who He was, but he was such a short little man that he couldn't see over the heads of the crowd.

4So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree, so that he could see Jesus, since Jesus would be going down that street.

5And when Jesus came to that place, He looked up and said, "Hurry up, Zacchaeus, and come down! You see, I have to stay at your house today."

6So Zacchaeus climbed down as fast as he could. And he was as happy as a man could be as he took Jesus to his house.

7When the people saw this, they all began to talk back and forth among themselves, sounding like a swarm of bees. They were saying, "He has gone in to stay with a man who is a terrible sinner!"*

8But Zacchaeus stood in front of Jesus and said to Him, "Lord, I want You to know that I'm going to give half of all my money and property to the poor. And if I have taken anything from anyone by threats or blackmail, I'm going to pay them back four times as much."

9And Jesus replied, "Today salvation has come to this house, for this man is also a son of Abraham* now. **10**You see, the Son of Man has come to look for the lost and save them."

The Rich Man and His Ten Slaves

11Now Jesus was getting close to Jerusalem, and the people with Him were thinking that He was going to set up God's Kingdom at any moment. And since some of these people were listening to His conversation

with Zacchaeus, Jesus went on and told them a story.

12"There was a man who belonged to a very wealthy family. And one day he started off on a trip to a country that was a long ways away. He was going to be made the king of his country,* and then he was going to come back home. **13**But before he left, he called in ten of his slaves and gave them each a mina,* and told them, 'Take care of my business while I'm gone.'

14"However the people who were living in his country hated this man. So after he left, they sent off some messengers to the Emperor to tell him, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

15"And after the Emperor made him king, he came back home and gave orders that those slaves to whom he had given the money should be brought in. He wanted to find out how they had taken care of his business.

16"The first one came in and said, 'Master, your mina has earned ten more minas.'

17" 'Wonderful!' said the king. 'You're a good slave. And since you have been faithful in a very small job, you will be put in charge of ten cities.'

18"Then the second slave came in. 'Master,' he said, 'your mina has made five minas.'

19" 'And you,' said the king, 'will be put in charge of five cities.'

20"Then another man came in and said, 'Look Master! Here is your mina which I have been keeping safely stored away in a handkerchief. **21**You see, I was always afraid of you, because you're a hard man. You're always taking something which isn't yours and reaping a harvest where you haven't planted any seed.'

22"And the king replied, 'You wicked slave, I'll use your own words to judge you. You knew that I'm a hard man, and that I'm always taking something which isn't mine, and reaping a harvest where I haven't planted any seed. **23**Why then didn't you put my money in the bank? Then when I came back, I would have had my money plus some interest.'

24"And then the king said to his bodyguards, 'Take the mina away from this man, and give it to the man who has ten minas.'

25" 'But sir,' they said, 'he already has ten minas.'

26 "And the king replied, 'I'm telling you that every person who has something will get more; but if one has nothing, he will lose even what he has'.*

27" 'And now bring in those enemies of mine who didn't want me to be their king, and kill them right here in front of me'."

28 And when He finished the story, Jesus started off again, leading the way up to Jerusalem.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Spring, 29, Sunday

29 When Jesus got close to Bethphage and Bethany,* on what was called 'Mount Olive', He sent out two of His followers and told them, **30**"Go into the village over there,* and just as you're coming into town, you'll find a colt tied up on which no one has ever ridden.* Untie it and bring it here. **31** And if anyone asks you why you're untying it, just tell him, 'Our Master needs him'."

32 So the two messengers started off, and they found everything just as Jesus had said. **33** But as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying this colt?"

34"Our Master needs him," they answered. **35** So they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw some of their long outer cloaks on the animal's back, and lifted Jesus up on him. **36** And as Jesus rode along, the people kept on spreading their long outer cloaks on the road.

37 And when Jesus got close to the place on Mount Olive where the road begins to run downhill, the whole crowd of His followers were so filled with joy that they began to sing at the top of their voices, praising God for all the miracles they had seen,

38 " ' God's blessings on the one who is coming!' the King, 'who is coming as the Lord's messenger'!"†

There is peace in heaven,
And glory and honor to the One who
is living in the highest heaven!"

39Then some of the Pharisees who were in the crowd said to Jesus, "Rabbi, tell your followers to behave themselves."

40And Jesus answered, "I'm telling you that if these people stop singing, the stones will start shouting."

41And when Jesus got closer and saw the city, He began to cry over it **42**as He said, "If you people of Jerusalem only knew today what it is that brings peace! But right now your eyes can't see such things."

43"I'm crying because the time will come when your enemies will build a wall around you, and surround you with soldiers, and cut off your escape on every side. **44**Then they will destroy all your houses and buildings, and all your people within you. Yes, they won't leave one stone standing on another inside your walls, because you didn't recognize the time when God came to save you."

Jesus Cleans out the Temple-yard

Monday

45The next day Jesus went into the Temple-yard* and began to drive out the men who were selling things there. **46**And as He did so, He said to them, "The Bible says, 'My house will be a house of prayer',⁺ but you have made it 'a hideout for robbers'."⁺

47After that He spent every day in the Temple-yard, explaining the Bible* to the people. And the head priests,* the scribes* and the members of the Council* kept on trying to find some way to kill Him. **48**But they couldn't find any way to do it, because there were always so many people crowding around Him, listening to what He had to say.

The Jews Challenge Jesus' Authority

Tuesday

20One day Jesus was in the Temple-yard, explaining the Bible to the people and telling them the Good News, when the head priests, the scribes, and some

members of the Council came up to Him and said, ²"Tell us, what kind of authority do you have to be doing things like this? And who is it who gave you this authority?"

³Jesus answered, "I'm also going to ask you a question. Tell me, ⁴what about John's baptizing? Was his authority from heaven or from men?"

⁵So they began to talk things over among themselves. "If we say, 'From heaven', he'll say, 'Why didn't you believe him?'" ⁶But if we say, 'From men', this whole crowd will stone us to death, because they really believe that John was a prophet." ⁷So they answered that they didn't know where it came from.

⁸And Jesus replied, "Then neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to be doing these things."

The Story of the Wicked Farmers

⁹Then Jesus began to tell the people this story. "There was a man who 'planted a field full of grape vines'.[†] Then he rented it out to some farmers and left home on a trip that would take quite a long time.

¹⁰"And when it was time to pick the grapes, the man sent one of his slaves to the farmers, so that they could give him his share of the crop from the vineyard. But the farmers beat the slave up and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹The owner then sent another slave, but they beat this man up too, and were mean and insulting to him, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²So the owner sent a third slave, but the farmers beat this man up also and threw him out.

¹³"Then the owner of the vineyard said to himself, 'What am I going to do? I'll send my son whom I love very much. No doubt they will have some respect for him.'

¹⁴"But when the farmers saw his son, they said to each other, 'This is the one who will own everything when his father dies. Let's kill him! Then all of his property will belong to us.' ¹⁵So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Now then, what will the owner of the vineyard do to those farmers? ¹⁶He'll go and kill them. And then he'll rent out the vineyard to some other farmers."

But when the people heard this story, they said, "We hope such a thing never really happens."

¹⁷Jesus then looked all around at the crowd, looking each one right in the eye, and said, "Then why does the Bible say,

'A stone which the builders decided was no good
is the very one which has become
the cornerstone'?*⁺

¹⁸"Everyone who falls on that stone will be all smashed up. And if that stone falls on anyone, it will crush him flat as a pancake."

The Jewish Leaders Lay a Trap for Jesus

¹⁹Now the scribes and the head priests tried to find some way to have Jesus arrested right then and there, because they knew that He had told this story about them, but they were afraid of the people. ²⁰But from then on they kept a close watch on Jesus. And they sent some spies, who pretended to be honest, law-abiding men, to try to trick Jesus into saying something wrong, so that they could hand Him over to the powerful authority of the Roman governor.

²¹So these men said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that you always speak and teach the truth, and you don't judge people by their outward appearance, and you always teach people the truth about God's Road.*

²²Does the Law allow us to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor or not?"

²³Of course Jesus knew all about their clever trap, so He said to them, ²⁴"Show me a dinar."* And when they did so, He asked, "Whose face and name are on it?"

²⁵"The Emperor's," they answered.

"Well then," said Jesus, "pay the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor, and pay God what belongs to God."

26So they weren't able to trick Jesus into saying anything wrong in front of the people. And they were so astonished at His answer that they didn't say another word.

The Sadducees also Question Jesus

27Next came some of the Sadducees, who say that the dead can't come back to life. They also had a question. **28**"Rabbi," they said, "Moses wrote a law for us which says, 'If a man's married brother dies having no children, that man must take the widow and raise a family for his brother.'⁺

29"And once there were seven brothers. The oldest one got married, and then died without having any children. **30**So the second brother married the widow, **31**and then the third brother married her. And the same thing happened with all seven. None of them had any children, and they all died. **32**And finally the woman also died. **33**Now then, what about the wife when the dead come back to life? Whose wife will she be? You see, all seven had her as their wife."

34Jesus answered, "In this life the men are getting married, and the women are being given in marriage. **35**But those whom God says are good enough to be raised back to life after they die and have a place in the Life to come won't be getting married or being married. **36**And of course they won't be dying any longer either, because they will be like the angels. And since God will have filled them with new Life, they will be God's children.

37"But even Moses* makes it clear that the dead will be raised back to life when he writes about the burning bush, where he says that 'the Lord is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'.⁺ **38**And He certainly isn't a God of dead people, but of living people, because He fills everyone with life.

39Then some of the scribes* spoke up and said, "Rabbi, you have given a fine answer." **40**You see, after this they didn't dare to ask Jesus any more questions.

Jesus Asks the Scribes a Question

41 But now Jesus asked them a question. "How can people say that the promised Savior is David's son?

42 After all, David himself says in the book of Psalms,

"The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit down here at My right hand

43 until I put your enemies under Your feet
like a footstool".¹⁺

44 "David therefore calls Him 'Lord'. So how can He be his son?"

Jesus Warns the People against the Scribes

45 Then while all the people were listening, Jesus said to His followers, **46** "Be on your guard against the scribes who like to walk around in their long robes, and love to be greeted as important people in the town squares,* and want to have the special chairs in the meeting houses,* and the places of honor at the dinner parties.* **47** They throw widows out of their homes, and then cover it all up by saying long prayers. Men like this will be punished more than other people."

Jesus Talks about Giving

21 Then Jesus looked up and saw some rich people dropping their gifts into the collection boxes.*

2 And He also saw a poor widow there, dropping in two leptons.* **3** And He said, "I'm telling you the truth



A LEPTON
OF PONTIUS
PILATE



U.S.
PENNY

when I say that this poor widow has given more than all the others. **4** You see, all these others have given some of their extra money they didn't need, but this woman, who didn't even have enough for her daily needs, has given everything she had to live on!"

Jesus Foretells the Destruction of the Temple

5Later on some of Jesus' followers were talking about the Temple-grounds,* and how it was decorated with beautiful stones and monuments built to praise God.

6So Jesus told them, "The time is coming when these stones you're looking at will be thrown to the ground, until there isn't a single one left standing on another one."

Jesus Talks about the End of the World

7Later on His followers asked Him, "Rabbi, when will this happen? And what will happen that will tell us when these things are going to take place?"

8Jesus answered, "Watch out, so that you aren't fooled and led astray. You see, a lot of men will come, using my name and saying, 'I'm the promised Savior,' and 'the time has come!' Don't go running after them!

9"And when you hear the sounds of wars and riots, don't be frightened. You see, these things have to happen first, but the end isn't going to come right then."

10Then He said, "One nation will attack another one, and kingdoms will go to war against other kingdoms. **11**And there will be great earthquakes and famines, and people dying from terrible sicknesses in all kinds of places, and things happening that will frighten people, and great miracles coming from heaven.

12"But before all these things happen, people will arrest you and hunt you down like animals, as they bring you into their local courts for trial, and put you in jail. They will even bring you to trial before kings and governors because of me. **13**But these things will give you a chance to tell others what you know about me. **14**You must make up your minds therefore not to worry ahead of time about what you will say. **15**For I myself will give you the words to speak, and a wisdom which your opponents will not be able to stand up against or reply to.

16"Yes, you will even be handed over to the police by your parents, your brothers, your relatives, and your friends; and some of you will be killed. **17**And you will be hated by everyone because of me.

18"But not one hair from your heads will ever be lost. **19**And by patiently holding on to your faith you will save your Life.

Jesus Describes the Destruction of Jerusalem

20"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you must realize that the time has come for her to be destroyed. **21**At that time the people who are in Judea must try to escape into the hills, and the people who are in Jerusalem must try to get out, and the people who are in the fields must not go back into the city. **22**Because that will be the time when Jerusalem will be punished, so that all the things that are written in the Bible will come true.

23"How terrible it will be at that time for women who are going to have a child and those who are nursing their babies, for there will be great suffering in the land, and God's holy anger will fall upon this nation. **24**Some of the people will be killed by the sword, and the rest will be taken away as prisoners to be sold as slaves in all the different countries of the world. And Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the people of the other nations* until the times that God has marked out for those nations come to an end.

Jesus Tells about His Second Coming

25"Later there will be strange things happening in the sun, the moon, and the stars. And the people of the other nations on earth will be terrified, not knowing what to do, because of the roaring of the ocean and the huge waves. **26**People will be fainting from fear and the thought of what is going to happen to the world, because 'God will be shaking the heavenly bodies'.⁺

27"And then they will see 'the Son of Man*' coming

on a cloud',⁺ with great power and shining heavenly beauty. ²⁸And when these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads in hope, because the time when you will be set free is getting close."

²⁹Then Jesus told them a story. "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰When you see that the time has come when their leaves begin to sprout, you know without anybody telling you that summer is almost here.

³¹"And in the same way when you see these things happening, you must know that God's Kingdom is almost here.

³²"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the kind of Israelites living today will never disappear until all these things happen. ³³Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.

No One Knows the Time

³⁴"But you must watch what you're doing, so that Day won't suddenly catch you with your minds all foggy and dulled because you're drunk or have a hangover, or because your minds are filled with worries about earthly things. ³⁵You see, that Day will come like a trap for everyone who lives in the whole world. ³⁶So you must always be awake and watching what's going on. And keep on praying at all times that you will be strong enough to escape all these things that are going to happen, and be allowed to stand before the Son of Man".

³⁷During those days Jesus was in the Temple-yard, explaining the Bible* to the people. But each evening He left the city and spent the night on what was called 'Mount Olive'. ³⁸And early in the morning all the people joined Him in the Temple-yard to listen to Him.

Judas Makes His Bargain to Betray Jesus Wednesday

22 Now the festival of the No-yeast Bread,* which is called the Passover,* was getting close, ²and

the head priests* and the scribes* were trying to find some way to kill Jesus, because they were afraid of what the people might do.

³And then Satan moved into Judas' heart. Judas was one of the twelve apostles, and was called "the Keriothan".* ⁴So now he left Jesus and the others and went to the head priests and the officers of the Temple police, and talked with them about how he could hand Jesus over to them. ⁵The priests were very happy, and offered to pay Judas some money, ⁶and Judas agreed. So he began to look for a good time, when there was no crowd of people around, to hand Jesus over to them.

Jesus Prepares to Eat the Passover

Thursday

⁷Then the day of the No-yeast Bread arrived, when they had to kill the Passover lamb. ⁸So Jesus sent Peter and John off with these instructions - "Go and get things ready for us to eat the Passover supper."

⁹"But where do You want us to get it ready?" they asked.

¹⁰And Jesus replied, "Listen carefully! When you get into the city, you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him home and into his house.

¹¹Then you tell the owner of the house, 'Our teacher sends you this message - "Where is your guest room where I can eat the Passover supper with my followers?"'

¹²Then he will show you a large room on the second floor, all set up for dinner. Get things ready there".*

¹³So the two of them started off. And they found everything just as Jesus had told them, and got the Passover supper ready.

The First Lord's Supper

Friday*

¹⁴When it was time to eat, Jesus and the apostles took their places at the table.* ¹⁵And He said to them, "I can't tell you how much I have looked forward to eating this Passover supper with you before I suffer.

¹⁶Because I'm telling you that I will never eat another

Passover supper until we eat the new Passover supper in God's Kingdom."

17Then He took a cup* and said a prayer of thanksgiving and said, "Take this cup and divide it among yourselves, **18**because I'm telling you that from this time on I will never take a drink of this wine until God's Kingdom comes."

19Later He took a little round loaf of bread* and said a prayer of thanksgiving. Then He broke it into pieces, and as He gave them the pieces He said, "This is my body* which is being given for you. Keep on doing this to remember me." **20**And after supper He took a cup* and did the same thing, saying, "This cup is the new agreement* established by my blood, which is being poured out for you."

21"However I must tell you that the man who is going to hand me over to my enemies is right here with me at this table. **22**You see, the Son of Man* is going to die according to God's eternal plan, but how terrible it will be for that man who hands him over to his enemies!"

23Then the apostles began to ask each other questions, trying to find out which one of them it could be who was going to do this.

The Argument about Who was the Greatest

24The apostles also got into an argument over which one of them was the greatest. **25**So Jesus said to them, "The kings of the other nations* treat their people like slaves, and people of the ruling class call themselves the 'generous friends of the poor'.* **26**But you mustn't be like that. Instead, the greatest one in your group must act like he's the littlest one, and the one who is the leader must act like he's the servant."

27"For example, which one is the greater, the one who is eating at the table or the one who is waiting on him? Isn't it the one who is eating? But I'm here in your group acting like the servant.*

28"You're the ones who have stayed with me in my

times of trial and testing. **29**And just as my Father has made me the ruler of a Kingdom, I'm going to **30**give you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom.* And you will be sitting on twelve thrones, ruling over the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus Warns Peter that He would Deny Him

31Then Jesus said to Peter, "My friend Simon, remember this. Satan has been given permission to put you all through the mill, like a farmer does with his wheat. **32**And I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith won't fail. So when you have recovered your faith, you must strengthen your brothers."

33Peter answered, "Lord, I'm ready to go to jail with You. I'm ready to die with You."

34And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you, Peter, that before the rooster crows this morning, you will say three times that you don't even know me."

Jesus again Tells about His Death

35Then He said to the apostles, "When I sent you out without any money or food or sandals, you didn't run short of anything, did you?"

"Not a thing," they answered.

36And then Jesus continued, "But now the one who has some money must take it along, and also some food. And the one who doesn't have a sword must sell his long outer cloak and buy one. **37**~~For~~ I'm telling you that I must make this statement in the Bible come true - 'People thought of Him as one of the criminals'.[†] You see, this was written about me, and it's going to happen to me soon."

38Then His followers said to Him, "Look, Lord! We have two swords right here."

And Jesus said to them, "That's plenty."

Jesus Prays in the Garden of Gethsemane

39Then Jesus left the city and went to Mount Olive,* as He usually did, and the apostles followed Him. **40**And

when He got to the place, Jesus said to them, "Start praying that you won't be tested."

41Then He walked away from them about as far as you can throw a stone, and got down on His knees and began to pray. **42**"Father," He said, "since You are willing to help me, take this cup* away from me. However don't do what I want, but what You want." **43**Then an angel arrived from heaven to give Him strength. **44**And as His agony grew worse, He prayed all the harder. And His sweat looked like drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

45And when Jesus finished His prayer, He got up and went back to His followers, and found them sleeping, because they were so worn out from sadness. **46**"Why are you sleeping?" He asked. "Get up and start praying that you won't be tested."

Jesus is Arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane

47Jesus was still talking when suddenly a crowd of people appeared, and one of the twelve apostles who was called Judas was leading them. He walked right up to Jesus to kiss Him.

48But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you handing the Son of Man over to his enemies with a kiss?"

49And now when Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we attack them with our swords?" **50**And one of them took a swing at the Head Priest's slave and cut off his right ear.

51But Jesus answered, "Let them have their way this far!" And then He touched the man's ear and made him well.

52After this Jesus said to the head priests and the Temple police and the members of the Council who had come after Him, "Did you have to come out with swords and clubs, as though I was starting a revolution? **53**I was with you every day in the Templeyard,* and you never raised a hand against me. But this is your time to act. Your kind of authority must

be used in the darkness."

54So they arrested Jesus and led Him away to the Head Priest's house.* And Peter followed them, staying a long ways behind.

Peter Denies Jesus

55At the house the men had built a fire in the middle of the yard. And since they were all sitting there together around the fire, Peter sat down in the middle of the group.

56Soon one of the servant girls noticed Peter as he sat there in the light of the fire. She stared at him for a while, and then she said, "This fellow was one of those who were with him."

57Peter however denied it, "Lady," he said, "I don't know him."

58Then a little later someone else looked at Peter and said, "You're one of them too."

But Peter replied, "No, my friend, I am not."

59And about an hour later another man began to talk like he was pretty sure of himself. "Sure enough," he said, "this fellow is one of those who were with him. After all, he's a Galilean."

60But Peter answered, "My friend, I don't know what you're talking about."

And right away, while he was still talking, a rooster crowed. **61**And then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered what the Lord had said, and how He had told him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will say three times that you don't want anything to do with me." **62**And he ran outside, and cried and sobbed so hard that he could hardly catch his breath.

63Then the men who were guarding Jesus began to make fun of Him. **64**They blindfolded Him and beat Him up, and said to Him, "Speak like a prophet! Who is it who hit you?" **65**They also said a lot of other nasty and insulting things to Him.

The Council Condemns Jesus to Death

66As soon as it got light the Council* of Israel gathered together for a meeting with the head priests and the scribes,* and Jesus was brought before this group.

67"Tell us," they said, "if you really are the promised Savior".*

"If I tell you, you'll never believe me," said Jesus. **68** And if I ask you a question, you won't answer. **69**But from now on 'the Son of Man' will be sitting at the right hand of the almighty God'."*

70Then they all began to talk at once. "Then you really are God's Son?" they asked.

And Jesus answered, "Now you're saying that I am."

71"Why do we have to have any further evidence?" they said. "After all, we've all heard it, right from his own mouth."

Jesus' Trial before Pilate

23 Then the members of the Council stood up and adjourned the meeting and brought Jesus to Pilate,* **2**where they began to tell him about all the things Jesus had done that were wrong. "We caught this fellow misleading our people," they said. "He's telling them not to pay taxes to the Emperor, and he claims to be the promised Savior, or king."

3So Pilate began to question Jesus. "Are you really the king of the Jews?" he asked.

And Jesus answered, "Are you saying that I am?"

4So then Pilate said to the head priests and the crowd of people, "I don't find this man guilty of any crime at all."

5But they just kept on talking louder and louder. "He's getting the people all over Judea stirred up by the things he's teaching them," they said. "He started out in Galilee, and now he's down here."

Pilate Sends Jesus to Herod

6When Pilate heard that, he asked if Jesus was a Galilean. **7**And when he found out that Jesus came from Herod's district, he sent Him to Herod,* who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8And when Herod saw Jesus he was very happy, because he had heard about Him, and he had been wanting to see Him for quite a long time.* He was hoping to see Jesus work some miracle.

9So Herod began to ask Jesus a lot of questions, but Jesus didn't give him any answer at all. **10**And while Herod was talking to Jesus, the head priests and the scribes were standing there accusing Jesus of doing all sorts of bad things.

11Finally Herod and his soldiers decided that Jesus wasn't worth talking to. So they dressed Him up in a fancy robe and made fun of Him for a while, and then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. **12**And on that day Herod and Pilate became friends. You see, before that they had been enemies.

Jesus is Sentenced to Death

13Now Pilate called together the head priests, the members of the Council, and the people, **14**and said to them, "You brought this man to me, saying that he was trying to turn the people away from the Emperor. And I'm telling you that when I questioned him right here before your eyes, I didn't find this man guilty of a single one of the things you accused him of doing. **15**And neither did Herod, because he sent him back here to us. So it's perfectly clear that this man hasn't done anything for which he should be killed. **16**Therefore I'm going to give him a little whipping to teach him a lesson, and set him free."

18But then the whole crowd began to yell, "Get rid of this fellow! Set Barabbas free for us!" **19**Barabbas was a man who had been thrown in jail because he had murdered a man in a riot against the government

which had broken out in the city.

20Pilate however wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke to the people again. **21**But they began to yell, "Put him on a cross! Put him on a cross!"

22Then for the third time Pilate said to them, "But what has this fellow done that's wrong? I haven't found him guilty of anything for which he should be killed. Therefore I'm going to give him a little whipping to teach him a lesson and set him free."

23But they kept putting the pressure on Pilate with their loud voices, asking that Jesus be put on a cross. And finally their shouting was too strong for Pilate, **24**and he decided to do what they wanted. **25**He set free the man they asked for, the one who was in jail because he had killed someone in the riot, and he handed Jesus over to be killed, as they wished.

Jesus is Killed

26And as they led Jesus away, the soldiers grabbed a man named Simon, from Cyrene, who was just coming into the city from the country. And they put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.*

27There was a big crowd of people following Jesus, and the women were pounding on their chests because they felt so bad, and were moaning and wailing over what was happening to Him. **28**So Jesus turned around and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop crying over what's happening to me. Instead, you should be crying over what's happening to yourselves and your children. **29**Because you must realize that the time is coming when people will say, 'The truly happy women are those who couldn't have, or didn't have any children, and the women who never nursed any children.'

30 At that time people will begin to
 'say to the mountains,
 "Fall on us!"
and to the hills,
 "Cover us up!"!†

31For if this is what they're doing to a green tree, what will happen to a dead one?"

32They were also taking two other men, who were criminals, out to be killed with Jesus. **33**And when they came to the place called "the Skull",* they put Jesus and the criminals on their crosses. One of them was at Jesus' right, and the other at His left.

34And while they were doing it Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they're doing."

After that the soldiers

"divided up His clothes among themselves
by shaking the lot";†

35and the people stood there "watching".‡

But the members of the Council were making fun of Jesus. "He saved others," they said. "Now this fellow must save himself, since he's the one whom God chose to be the promised Savior."

36The soldiers also made fun of Him. They went up to Him and offered Him some sour wine, **37**and as they did so they said to Him, "Since you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

38You see, there was a sign above His head which read, "This is the King of the Jews."

39And one of the criminals who was hanging there was also saying insulting things to Him. "Aren't you the promised Savior? Save yourself, and us too."

40But the other criminal spoke up and told his friend to behave himself. "Aren't you even afraid of God?" he asked. "The truth is that you're getting the same punishment He is. **41**And we are being treated fairly, for we're getting what we deserve for what we did. But this man hasn't done anything wrong at all." **42**And then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You get into Your kingdom."

43And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that today you will be with me in Paradise."

44aBy now it was about noon, and suddenly **45a**the sun stopped shining, **44b**and it got dark all over the whole land until three o'clock in the afternoon, **45b**when the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, right down the middle. **46**And then Jesus shouted at the top of His voice, "Father, 'I'm putting my spirit into Your hands to keep for me'."† And after He said this, He stopped breathing.

47When the Roman army captain saw what had happened, he began to praise God. "This man certainly never did anything wrong," he said.

48And when the crowd which had gathered there to watch the show saw what had happened, they all started back home, pounding on their chests.

49And all of "Jesus' friends" and the women who had followed Him from Galilee, "were standing some distance away"† watching all this.

Jesus is Buried

50aThen a surprising thing happened. There was a man by the name of Joseph **51b**who lived in one of the Jewish cities called Arimathea. **50b**He was a good man, and perfectly holy in God's sight,* **51c**and he was waiting for God's Kingdom to come. He was also a member of the Council, **51a**but he hadn't taken part in their plan, or in what they had done. **52**This man now went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. **53**Then he took the body down from the cross and wrapped it up in a linen sheet and put it in a grave which had been carved out of the rock. Nobody had ever been buried there before. **54**It was still Preparation Day,* but by now the day of rest was about to begin. **55**And the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and got a good look at the grave, and how and where Joseph put Jesus' body. **56**And then they went back to the city and prepared spices and perfumes.* On Saturday however they rested, as the Law requires.

Jesus Comes Back to Life

24 But on Sunday morning, just as the first bit of light was showing in the sky, the women went out to the grave, carrying the spices they had prepared.

2And when they got there, they found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the cave. **3**And when they went inside, they didn't find the Lord Jesus' body! **4**They were standing there, not knowing what all this meant, when suddenly there were two men standing right beside them, dressed in clothes that were flashing like lightning! **5**The women became frightened, and fell down with their faces to the ground.*

Then one of the men said to them, "Why are you searching among the dead for someone who is alive? **6**Remember what He told you while He was still in Galilee. **7**He said that the Son of Man* would have to be given over into the hands of sinful men* and be put on a cross, and that He would come back to life again on the third day." **8**And then the women remembered that this was what Jesus had said.

9So when the women got back from the cave, they reported all these things to the eleven and all the others. **10**Those who went out to the grave were Mary from Magdala, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, but the rest of the women were with them when they told the apostles all this. **11**But their story didn't make any sense to the apostles, and they didn't believe them. **12**Peter, however, got up and ran out to the cave. And when he bent down and peeked in, the only thing he saw was the cloths. And then he came back, wondering what had happened.

Jesus Appears to Two of His Followers

13But then a wonderful thing happened. Later that same day two of Jesus' followers were on their way to a village called Emmaus,* which was about seven or eight miles from Jerusalem. **14**And they were talking together about all these things that had happened. **15**And while they were talking and discussing all this,

Jesus came up to them and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶But some strange power was controlling their eyes, so that they didn't recognize Him.

¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "What's all this that you're talking about as you're walking along?"

And they stopped walking, and stood there, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them whose name was Cleopas* said to Jesus, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's happened there these last few days?"

¹⁹"What kind of things?" Jesus asked.

And Cleopas answered, "The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth. What a man! He was a prophet in God's eyes, and in the eyes of all the people of Israel! And the things He did were as powerful as His words!"

²⁰And the other man added, "But then our head priests and the members of our Council* handed Him over to the governor, who sentenced Him to death and put Him on a cross."

²¹"And we were hoping He was the one who was going to set Israel free," said Cleopas.

"But now listen to this!" said the other man. "This is the third day* since all that happened. ²²But this morning some of the women in our group really amazed us. They went out to the grave early this morning, ²³but they didn't find His body. And when they came back, they said that they had seen what looked to them like some angels who said that He's alive!"

²⁴"And then," said Cleopas, "some of the men in our group went out to the grave, and they found things just exactly like the women said. But they didn't see Him."

²⁵Then Jesus said to them, "What fools you are! How slow you are to believe the things which the prophets have said! ²⁶Didn't the promised Savior* have to suffer all these things, and then go back to His wonderful heavenly Life?" ²⁷And then He started with Moses and explained to them what all the prophets

had written about Himself in all of their writings.

28By this time they were almost into the village where they were going, and Jesus acted like He wanted to keep on going. **29**But the two men told Him that He just couldn't do that. "You must stay here with us," one of them said. "It's getting dark."

"Yes," said the other man, "the day is over."

So Jesus went in to stay with them. **30**And while He was eating with them, He took a little round loaf of bread* and asked God to bless it. Then He broke it into pieces and began to hand the pieces to them.* **31**And then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. But as soon as they did, He disappeared, right before their eyes!

32Then one of them said, "Weren't our hearts on fire when He was talking to us on the road?"

"Yes," said the other, "especially while He was opening up the Bible for us."

33And then they got up right away and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven apostles and their friends gathered together. **34**And they were talking about how the Lord had really been raised back to life, and how Simon had seen Him.

35So then Cleopas and his friend told the others the whole story of what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized Jesus by the way He broke the bread.

Jesus Appears to All the Apostles

36While they were still talking about all this, suddenly Jesus was standing there in the middle of the room! And He said to them, "You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about." **37**But they were startled and frightened, since they thought they were seeing a ghost.

38Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so excited? Why are these questions and doubts springing up in your minds? **39**Look at my hands, and my feet, and

you can see that it's really me. Touch me and look at me! You can see that I have flesh and bones, and that's something a ghost doesn't have." ⁴⁰And after He said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

⁴¹They were happy. But they were also so completely astonished that they still didn't believe Him.

So Jesus said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here?" ⁴²And when they handed Him a piece of cooked fish, ⁴³He took it and ate it right in front of them.

⁴⁴Then He said to them. "While I was still with you I told you that everything that is written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must come true." ⁴⁵And then He opened their minds so that they could understand the Bible. He told them, ⁴⁶"The Bible says that the promised Savior must suffer and come back to life again from the dead on the third day.*" ⁴⁷And by His orders and authority the people of all the nations* must be told that they must change their minds and their way of living, so that they can have the forgiveness of sins. And it must start in Jerusalem.

⁴⁸"You are the ones who have seen and heard and learned all this, and you must tell others what you know.*" ⁴⁹And so I'm going to send you the gift my Father has promised. Therefore you must stay here in this city until you are filled with God's power from heaven."

Jesus Goes up into Heaven

⁵⁰Then Jesus led His followers out of the city until they were close to Bethany. And then He raised His hands and gave them His blessing. ⁵¹And while He was talking, He started to rise up in the air, and kept on going right up into heaven.*

⁵²Later His followers went back to Jerusalem with their hearts filled with joy. ⁵³And they spent every day in the Temple-yard* praising God.

THE GOOD NEWS ACCORDING TO JOHN

(Written about 90 A.D.)*

Introduction — Who Jesus is

- 1 The Word* was living
before the world was created.
He was living with God,
because He was God.
- 2 This is the one I'm writing about -
the one who was living with God
before the world was created.
- 3 He created everything,
and there wasn't one single thing created
that He didn't create.
- 4 He was the source of Life;
and His Life was the source of the light* people
need.
- 5 This light is still shining in the darkness,*
for the darkness has never put it out.

John Comes to Tell about Jesus

Spring, 26

- 6 A man appeared who was sent by God.
His name was John.
- 7 This man came to tell people
what he had seen and heard and learned.
He came to tell people what he knew about the Light,
so that everyone would hear what he said,
and believe in the Light.
- 8 That man wasn't the Light,
but he came to tell people what he knew
about the Light.
- 9 And the real Light,
which provides light for every human being,
was coming into the world.

*Helpful notes for John begin on page 776

How Jesus came into the World

- 10 He was in the world,
the world He had created,
but the world didn't recognize Him.
- 11 He came to His own country,
but His own people didn't accept Him.*
- 12 But there were people who did accept Him,
people who believe in Him now.
And He has given all these people
the right to become God's children.
- 13 These people didn't become God's children
in a natural way.
It had nothing to do with anyone's sexual desires,
or the fact that some man wanted to have a child.
God is their Father.
- 14 And so the Word became a human being, **5/6 B.C.**
with a body of flesh and blood,
and lived in our world for a while.
And we saw His shining heavenly beauty,
like the beauty of a father's only son.
And He was filled with truth
and love for those who don't deserve it.
- 16 And so we have all received one heavenly gift
after another from His unlimited supply.
- 17 For God gave the Law through Moses;
but His undeserved love and His truth
have come to us through Jesus, the promised
Savior.
- 18 No one has ever seen God.
But God's only Son, who is always at his
Father's side,
has told us everything about Him.

What John the Baptist said about Jesus

15 John was telling people what he knew about this Son of God. And he was shouting at the people as he said, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'The Man who is following me is a much greater

man than I am, because he was living long before I was born'."

19And this is what John said when the Jews* sent some priests* and Levites* to him from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20He didn't refuse to answer, but spoke right out and said, "I'm certainly not the Messiah".*

21So they asked him, "Who are you, then? Are you Elijah?"

"No," he said, "I'm not."

"Are you that Prophet?"* they asked.

"No," John replied.

22So then they said to him, "Who are you? We have to give an answer to the people who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?" (**24**They had been sent by the Pharisees*).

23And John answered,

"I'm the 'someone' whose voice is calling out
in the desert,

'Build a straight highway for the Lord!'+
just as Isaiah the prophet said."

25Next they asked him, "Well, then, since you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or that Prophet, why are you baptizing?"

26And John replied, "I'm baptizing with water. But for some time a man has been living here among you whom you don't even know. **27**That's the Man who is following me; and I'm not good enough to even untie the strap of His sandal".*

28All this happened in Bethany, which was on the other side of the Jordan river. That's where John was baptizing.

The Lamb of God

Fall, 26

29The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him. "Look!" he said. "There is God's Lamb, who is going to take away the world's sin.* **30**This is the Man I was talking about when I said, 'A Man is following

+Verses quoted in John are on page 877

me who is a much greater man than I am, because He was living long before I was born.' ³¹And even I didn't know Him for a while. But the reason I have come baptizing with water is to tell the people of Israel who He is."

³²Then John told the people, "I can still see the Spirit as it came down out of heaven like a dove, and it sat on Him and stayed there. ³³I didn't know Him for a while, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'You will see the Spirit come down and sit on a certain Man and stay there. That's the one who will be baptizing with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴I can still see it, and I'm telling you what I saw and heard and learned - that this Man is God's Son."

Jesus Finds His First Followers

³⁵The next day John was standing there again with two of his followers, ³⁶when he saw Jesus walking along. "Look!" John said, "There is God's Lamb!" ³⁷And when the two followers heard him say this, they followed Jesus.

³⁸A little later Jesus turned around and saw them following Him. "What are you looking for?" He asked them.

They said to Him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" (Rabbi is a Hebrew word which means 'Teacher').*

³⁹Jesus replied, "Come along, and you'll see."

So they went with Him, and found out where He was staying. It was about ten o'clock in the morning when they got there, and they stayed there with Him the rest of that day.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two men who heard what John said and followed Jesus. ⁴¹And the first thing he did was find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah!"* (Messiah is a Hebrew word which means 'the Anointed One').*

⁴²Then Andrew brought his brother to Jesus. And when Jesus saw him, He said, "You are Simon, John's

son. I'm going to call you Kephas" (which means 'a stone' - Peter).

43The next day Jesus had decided to leave Bethany and go back to Galilee. But then He found Philip. "Come and live with me as one of my students!"* said Jesus. **44**Philip came from Bethsaida, the town where Andrew and Peter lived.

45Philip then found Nathanael, and told him, "We have found the one whom Moses and the prophets wrote about in the Bible.* His name is Jesus. He's the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

46Nathanael answered, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

And Philip replied, "Come and see."

47So when Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards Him, He said, "Look! There's a real Israelite. There can't be anything false or dishonest about him."

48And Nathanael said to Jesus, "Where did you ever get acquainted with me?"

And Jesus answered, "I saw you sitting under that fig tree, before Philip called you."

49"Rabbi," Nathanael answered, "You really are God's Son. You really are the King of Israel."

50And Jesus replied, "Do you believe all that just because I told you that I saw you underneath that fig tree? You're going to see greater things than this."

51I'm telling you people the truth when I say that you will all see 'the heavens' standing wide open, and 'God's angels going up and down'[†]on the Son of Man."*

Jesus Goes to a Wedding in Cana

2 Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana, in the district of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, **2**and Jesus and His followers had also been invited to the wedding.

3And when they ran out of wine, Jesus' mother said to Him, "They don't have any more wine."

4Jesus answered, "Why are you coming to me, mother? My time hasn't come yet."

5But His mother said to the servants, "You do whatever He tells you."

6Since the Jews have rules about washing,* there were six stone water jars standing there in the house, each one holding twenty to thirty gallons. **7**So Jesus told the servants, "Fill these jars with water!" And when they had filled them right to the top, **8**He said to them, "Now dip some out and take it to the man in charge of the dinner." And they did.

9aBut when the man in charge of the dinner tasted the water, it was wine. And since he didn't know where it had come from, he called the bridegroom **10**and said to him, "Everyone serves his good wine first, and after the people have gotten drunk, he brings out the poor wine. But you have kept your good wine until now." **9b**Of course, the only ones who knew where this wine had come from were the servants who had dipped the water out.

11This was Jesus' first miracle, and it was done in Cana, which is in Galilee. It gave the people a little glimpse of Jesus' wonderful heavenly power. And His followers began to believe in Him.

12After this Jesus went down to Capernaum with His mother, His brothers and His followers, and they stayed there a few days.

The Son of God Cleans out His House

Spring, 27

13By now the Jewish Passover Festival* was getting close; so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **14**And He found some men in the Temple-yard* who were selling oxen, sheep and pigeons, and some bankers sitting at their tables. **15**So He made a whip out of some ropes and drove them all out of the Temple-yard, along with their sheep and oxen. Then He tipped over the bankers' tables and poured their money out all over the yard. **16**And He told the men who were selling pigeons, "Take these things out of here! You must stop turning my

Father's house into a country store." ¹⁷And His followers remembered that the Bible says, "My great love for Your house is eating me up".⁺

¹⁸But it was the Jews* who answered Jesus. They said to Him, "Since you're doing these things, what miracle are you going to do for us as a sign of your authority to do them?"

¹⁹Jesus answered, "You tear down this Temple, and I'll rebuild it in three days."

²⁰"It took forty-six years to build this Temple," said the Jews, "and you're going to rebuild it in three days?"

²¹The temple Jesus was talking about, however, was His body. ²²And when Jesus was raised back to life from the dead, His followers remembered that He had said this; and they came to believe the Bible, and also what Jesus had told them.

²³And while Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, a lot of people came to believe in Him when they saw the miracles He was doing. ²⁴But Jesus didn't trust them or accept them as His followers, because He knew what kind of people they all were. ²⁵He didn't have to have someone tell Him what people are like, because He always knew what was in everyone's heart.

Jesus Talks to Nicodemus

³ There was a man named Nicodemus, who was one of the Pharisees* and a member of the Sanhedrin.* ²One night this man came to see Jesus and said to Him, "Rabbi,* we know that You are a teacher whom God has sent, because no one could be doing these miracles You're doing unless God was with him."

³Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that no one can ever see God's Kingdom unless he or she is born again."

⁴"But how can a person be born when he's old?" asked Nicodemus. "He can't get back inside his mother

and be born a second time, can he?"

⁵Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that no one can get into God's Kingdom unless he or she is born by water and the Spirit. ⁶Any child of sinful human beings is a sinful human being,* but any child of the Spirit is a spiritual person. ⁷You mustn't be surprised because I told you that you must be born again.* ⁸The wind* blows wherever it wishes, and you can hear the sound it makes. But you don't know where it's coming from or where it's going. That's exactly the way it is with everyone who is the Spirit's child."

⁹"But how can things like this happen?" asked Nicodemus.

¹⁰Jesus answered, "You're an Israelite rabbi. Can it be that you don't understand these things? ¹¹I'm telling you the truth when I say that we're talking about something we know about, and we're telling about something we have seen; but you people never believe what we're telling you. ¹²Since you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how will you ever believe me if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³And no one has ever gone up into heaven except the Son of Man* who has come down out of heaven. ¹⁴And the Son of Man has to be lifted up in exactly the same way that Moses lifted up that snake in the desert,* ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in Him can have eternal Life."

¹⁶You see, God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that every person who believes in Him will not be lost forever, but will have eternal Life. ¹⁷After all, God didn't send His Son into the world to sentence the world to death, but to save it. ¹⁸So the person who believes in Him will not be sentenced to death; but the one who doesn't believe in Him is already sentenced to death, because he doesn't believe in God's only Son. ¹⁹And this is the right judgment, because the Light is here in the world, but people love the darkness rather than the Light, because the things they're doing are wicked. ²⁰You see, every

person who does evil things hates the light, and won't come into the light, because he doesn't want people to see the things he's doing. ²¹But the person who does things that are true and good comes into the light, so that everyone will see that the things he's doing are being done by God's power.

John Talks about Jesus and Himself

²²After the festival Jesus and His followers traveled around the district of Judea. And they stayed there for a while and Jesus began to baptize.

^{23a}Of course John was also baptizing there in Judea,* ²⁴because he hadn't been thrown in jail yet. ^{23b}He was at Aenon, which is close to Salim, because there were a lot of springs there, and since the people kept on coming to him, he kept on baptizing them.

²⁵And so one day some of John's followers got into an argument with one of the Jews* about religious washings.* ²⁶So they went to John and said to him, "Rabbi, you remember that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, the one you told us about? Well, now that fellow is baptizing, and everyone is going to him!"

²⁷And John answered, "A man can have only what God gives him. ²⁸You all heard me when I said, 'I'm certainly not the Messiah.* God sent me out ahead of the Messiah'. ²⁹The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The bridegroom's friend, who stands by the door and listens for him,* is filled with joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. And so my joy is now complete. ³⁰He must become greater and I must become smaller.

³¹"The one who comes from above is above everyone. The one who is born here on earth is part of the earth, and talks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven ³²tells about what He has seen and heard, but no one believes what He's saying. ³³But the person who does believe what He says has made it clear that he believes that God speaks the truth.

34" After all, the man whom God sends out speaks exactly what God has to say, because the Spirit gives him the full message.

35"Our Father loves His Son, and has given Him authority over everything.* **36**And so the person who believes in the Son has eternal Life. But the person who doesn't believe in the Son will never see Life. That person will never escape God's holy anger."

Jesus Meets a Woman in Samaria

4 **1b**At that time Jesus was winning and baptizing more followers than John, **2**although Jesus Himself didn't baptize anyone. It was His followers who did the baptizing. **1a**So when Jesus found out that the Pharisees had heard about this, **3**He left Judea and started off back to Galilee.

4This meant that He had to go through Samaria. **5**And so He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which is close to the piece of land which Jacob gave to his son Joseph. **6**Jacob's well is also there.

It was about six o'clock in the evening. And since Jesus was tired out from the trip, He sat down by the well. **7**And soon a Samaritan woman came out to the well to get some water. So Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." **8**You see, His followers had gone off to the city to buy food.

9She said to Him, "You're a Jew, and I'm a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" You see, the Jews will never use the same cups or jars that a Samaritan has used.*

10Jesus answered, "If you knew anything about God's free gift, and who it is who is asking you for a drink, you would ask Him for a drink, and He would give you living water."

11Then she said to Him, "Sir, you don't have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where are you going to get this living water? **12**You certainly aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He's the one who gave us this well, and he and his sons and his animals all

drank from it."

13Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again, **14**but the person who drinks the water I will give him will never get thirsty -- never! Instead, the water I will give him will become a spring of water inside of him, bubbling up and giving him eternal Life."

15Then the woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep on coming out here to get water."

16"Go and get your husband and come back here," said Jesus.

17"I don't have a husband," answered the woman.

"You're right when you say, 'I don't have a husband'," said Jesus. **18**"The truth is that you have had five husbands, and the man you're living with now certainly isn't your husband. You have told the truth about that."

19"Sir," said the woman, "I see that you really are a prophet. **20**Our forefathers worshiped on this mountain.* But you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where we must worship."

21"My dear woman," said Jesus, "you must believe me when I say that the time is coming when you won't be worshiping my Father either here on this mountain or in Jerusalem. **22**You people don't know whom you're worshiping. But we Jews do know whom we're worshiping, because salvation is coming from the Jews. **23**But the time is coming -- in fact, it's here right now -- when the real worshipers will worship my Father in the true way, as the Spirit leads them. And my Father is looking for this kind of worshipers. **24**God is a spirit. So those who worship Him must worship Him in the true way, as the Spirit leads them."

25Then the woman said to Jesus, "I know that the Messiah is coming, the one who is called the Anointed One. And when He comes, He will explain everything to us."

26And Jesus replied, "You're talking to Him right now, because I am that Messiah!"

27Just then Jesus' followers came back, and they were astonished that He was talking to a woman.* However no one asked her what she wanted, and they didn't ask Jesus why He was talking to her.

28So the woman left her water jug, and went back to the city, and said to the people, **29**"Come and take a look at a man who told me everything I have ever done. He couldn't be the Messiah, could he?" **30**So they all left the city and went out to see Him.

31And while she was gone, Jesus' followers kept on asking Him questions, and saying, "Rabbi, eat something!"

32But His answer was, "I have food to eat that you don't know anything about."

33So His followers began to talk among themselves. "There isn't anyone who could have brought Him something to eat, is there?"

34Then Jesus said to them, "My food is doing what the one who sent me wants, and finishing up His work.

35Aren't you saying now, 'Four more months, and it will be time to cut the grain'? Listen to what I'm telling you! Look out there, over the fields, and you can see that they're already ripe and ready to be cut.

36The one who does the cutting is earning his pay right now, and is bringing his crop into eternal Life, so that the one who does the planting and the one who does the harvesting can both be happy. **37**You see, in this case the old saying is true - 'One man plants the seed, and another one cuts the grain.'* **38**I'm the one who has sent you out to gather in the harvest in a field where you haven't done any work at all. Others have done the hard work and you have come in to gather in the fruits of their work."

39And a lot of Samaritans from that city came to believe in Jesus because of what that woman kept on telling them, "He told me everything I have ever done."

40Therefore when the Samaritans came to Jesus, they asked Him to stay there with them; and He stayed there two days. **41**And a great many people came to believe in Him because of what He told them. **42**And they kept on saying to the woman, "Now we believe in Him, and it isn't any longer just because of what you told us. Because now we have heard Him ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Jesus Heals a Roman Officer's Son

43Then after those two days Jesus left Sychar and started back to Galilee, **44**although Jesus Himself said, "A prophet has no honor and respect in His own country." **45**But when He got to Galilee, the people there made Him welcome, because they had also gone to the festival in Jerusalem and had seen all the things He had done there. **46**So He went back to Cana, in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine.

And there was a Roman officer in Capernaum whose son was sick. **47**And when this man heard that Jesus had returned to Galilee from Judea, he went to Him and asked Him to come down and make his son well, because the boy was dying.

48But Jesus said to the man, "If you people don't see miracles and wonderful things, you will never believe."

49And the officer replied, "Please, sir, come down before my child dies."

50Then Jesus said to him, "Go on home! Your son is going to live." And the man believed what Jesus told him, and started out for home.

51And while he was on his way home some of his slaves ran out and met him. "Your son is going to live!" they told him.

52So then the man asked them what time it was when his boy got better.

And they told him, "Yesterday at one o'clock in

the afternoon the fever left him."

53Then his father remembered that it was exactly at that time that Jesus had said to him, "Your son is going to live." And he came to believe in Jesus, and everyone else in his house did too.

54And Jesus did this second miracle in Galilee, after He had come back from Judea.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man in Jerusalem May, 27

5 Some time later Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.*

2And near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there's a pool which has five covered patios around it. It's called "Bethzatha"* in Aramaic.* **3**And there was always a big crowd of sick people who were blind, crippled and paralyzed, lying on these patios.

5One of the men who was there had been crippled for thirty-eight years. **6**And when Jesus saw this man lying there, He knew that he had been sick for such a long time. And so He asked the man, "Do you want to get well?"

7And the sick man answered, "Sir, I don't have anyone to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. So while I'm trying to get there, someone else always steps down into it ahead of me."

8Then Jesus said to him, "Get up, and pick up your little padded mat,* and start walking!" **9**And right away the man got well, and picked up his mat and began to walk around.

And this happened on a Saturday.* **10**So the Jews* kept on saying to the man who had been cured, "This is Saturday, and it's against the Law for you to carry your mat."*

11And he answered, "The man who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your little padded mat and start walking'."

12"Who is this man?" the Jews asked, "the one who said to you, 'Pick it up and start walking'?"

13But the man who had been healed didn't know who it was, because Jesus had disappeared in the crowd there at the pool.

14But later on Jesus found the man in the Temple-yard,* and said to him, "Now listen to me! You're well now. But you mustn't go on living in sin any longer, or something worse may happen to you."

15Then the man went and told the Jews* that Jesus was the one who had made him well. **16**And because Jesus kept on doing things like this on Saturday, the Jews kept on trying to find a way to kill Him.

17And Jesus always gave them this answer, "My Father has always been working to this very day, and I'm always working too." **18**And so the Jews kept on trying all the harder to find some way to kill Jesus, because He was not only breaking the Saturday law, but He also kept on saying that God was His Father, and was making Himself equal to God.

19But this was always Jesus' answer. "I'm telling you the truth when I say that a son doesn't think up new things to do. He does what he sees his father doing. **20**You see, my Father loves His Son, and He's always showing Him how to do all the things He's doing. And He will show Him how to do even greater things than these, so that you people will be astonished.

21"For example, my Father raises the dead and makes them alive. Therefore His Son will also make alive whomever He wants. **22**But my Father isn't judging anyone, because He has given the authority to do all the judging to His Son. **23**Therefore everyone can honor the Son just as much as they honor his Father. The person who doesn't honor the Son isn't honoring His Father who sent Him.

24"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who listens to what I say and believes in the one who sent me has eternal Life, and isn't going to be sentenced to death, because he has already gone from death into Life. **25**And I'm telling you the truth when I say

that the time is coming when the dead will hear the voice of God's Son; and when they hear it, they will come back to Life. And that time is here right now!

26You see, just as my father is the source of Life, He has also made His Son the source of Life. **27**And He has given His Son the authority to be the Judge, because He is the Son of Man.*

28"Don't be surprised when I tell you that the time is coming when all the people who are dead will hear His voice, **29**and come out of their graves. Those who have done good things will be raised back to Life, but those who have done bad things will be raised again to be sentenced to Death.

30"I'm not able to do anything that I have thought of myself. I keep on listening to my Father, and then I decide. And what I decide is right, because I'm not trying to do what I want, but what the One who sent me wants.

31"If I'm telling people about myself, what I say doesn't have to be accepted as true.* **32**But there's someone else who is telling people what he knows about me, and I know that what he's telling them about me is true.* **33**You sent messengers to John, and he told them the truth.* **34**Talking for myself, I don't care about what any human being says about me, but I'm telling you these things so that you can be saved. **35**John was a bright, shining lamp, and for a while even you people were willing to enjoy his light.

36"But I have things to show you which are much greater than what John said about me. I'm talking about the things my Father has given me to do. Yes, these things that I'm doing are telling people about me. And they're telling everyone that my Father has sent me.

37"And then there's my Father who sent me. He also has told people what He knows about me. But you have never heard His voice or seen His face. **38**And His Word isn't living in your hearts, because you people don't believe in this man He sent. **39**You keep on searching the Bible, because you think you will find eternal

Life there; and these are the books which are telling people about me. ⁴⁰But you refuse to come to me so that you can have Life.

⁴¹"I don't care about the glory and honor other people give me. ⁴²But I know you people, and I know that you have no love for God in your hearts. ⁴³Look at me! I have come as my Father's messenger, but you aren't accepting me. If someone else comes and introduces himself, you will accept him. ⁴⁴So how could people like you ever come to believe in me? You're interested in receiving praise from one another, but you aren't looking for the praise that comes from the one true God.

⁴⁵"But don't be thinking that I'm the one who is going to accuse you when you stand before my Father. Moses is the one who's going to accuse you, the one you're building your hopes on. ⁴⁶You see, if you really believe Moses, you would believe me, because He wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you don't believe what Moses wrote, how will you ever believe what I am saying?"

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand People

Spring, 28

6 Some time later Jesus sailed across Lake Galilee, which is also called Lake Tiberias.* ²And now a big crowd of people followed Him, because they were watching the miracles He was doing on the sick people. ³And when He landed, Jesus went up the side of the mountain, and sat down there with His followers.

⁴This was just before the Passover, one of the Jewish festivals. ⁵And when Jesus looked up and saw the big crowd of people coming towards Him, He said to Philip, "Where can we buy some food for these people to eat?" ⁶When He said this, He was testing Philip, because He knew what He was going to do.

⁷Philip answered, "Two hundred dinars* wouldn't buy enough bread for each one of them to have just a little piece."

⁸Then one of Jesus' followers named Andrew spoke up. He was Simon Peter's brother. ⁹"There's a little

boy here," he said, "who has five little round loaves of barley bread* and two little fish. But how far will that go with so many people?"

10"Tell the people to stretch out on the ground",* said Jesus.

And since there was a lot of grass there, about five thousand people stretched out on the ground. **11**Then Jesus took the little loaves of bread, and said a prayer of thanksgiving, and passed them out to the people who were resting there. And He also did the same thing with the fish, giving the people as much as they wanted.

12And when everyone was full, Jesus said to His followers, "Gather up the broken pieces that are left over, so that nothing will be wasted." **13**So they gathered up twelve big baskets full of broken pieces that were left over from the five little loaves of barley bread by the people who had eaten.

14And when the people saw this miracle that Jesus had done, they were all saying, "This man really is the Prophet* who is going to come into the world."

15And so when Jesus realized that they were going to come and carry Him off by force to make Him king, He started off again and went further up the mountain by Himself.

Jesus Walks on the Water

16Later that afternoon Jesus' followers went down to the lake **17**and got into a boat, and started out across the lake for Capernaum. But by now it was already dark, and Jesus still hadn't caught up with them. **18**Then a strong wind began to blow, and the water began to get rough.

19Then, after they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on top of the water. And when He was getting close to the boat, they got scared.

20But He said to them, "It's really me. Don't be afraid."

21So then they wanted to take Him into the boat.

And as soon as they did, the boat landed at the place where they were going.

Jesus Tells the People about the Living Bread

22The next day the crowd that was still there on the other side of the lake realized that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus hadn't gotten into that boat with His followers, but that they had sailed away by themselves. **23**But then some boats from Tiberias landed there, close to the place where they had eaten the bread, after the Lord had given thanks. **24**And so when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His followers were there, they got into those boats and went to Capernaum, looking for Jesus. **25**And when they found Him on the other side of the lake, they said to Him, "Rabbi,* when did you get here?"

26Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that you aren't looking for me because you saw some miracles, but because you ate some of that bread and got filled up. **27**You mustn't be working for the kind of food that spoils, but for the kind of food that keeps forever and gives eternal Life. The Son of Man* will give you this food, because He has God the Father's seal of approval."

28Then they said to Jesus, "What are the things that God wants us to be doing?"

29And Jesus answered, "God wants you to believe in the one He has sent."

30So one of them said to Him, "What miracle are you going to do so that we can see it and believe in you?"

"Yes," said another one, "what are you going to do? **31**Our forefathers ate manna in the desert, just as the Bible says -

'He gave them bread to eat that came from heaven'."⁺

32And Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that it wasn't Moses who gave you that bread which came from heaven. But my Father is now giving you the real bread that comes from heaven. **33**You

see, God's bread is the One who who is coming down out of heaven and giving Life to the world."

34Then they said to Him, "Lord, keep on giving us this bread forever."

35And Jesus answered, "I am the living Bread. The person who comes to me will never be hungry, and the person who believes in me will never be thirsty - never! **36**But I have told you that even though you have seen me, you still don't believe.

37"Every person whom my Father gives me will come to me, and I will never drive away anyone who comes to me, **38**because I have come down from heaven to do what the One who sent me wants, not what I want. **39**And the One who sent me doesn't want me to lose one person out of all those He has given me. Instead, He wants me to raise them all back to Life again on the last Day. **40**Yes, my Father wants everyone who sees His Son and believes in Him to have eternal Life. And I will raise them all back to Life on the last Day!"

41Now the Jews* began to talk about Jesus among themselves in voices just above a whisper, so that they sounded like a swarm of bees. They were muttering about Jesus' words, "I am the Bread which has come down from heaven." **42**And they were saying, "This fellow is Jesus, Joseph's son, isn't he? We know his father and mother. So how can he be saying, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43Jesus answered, "Stop muttering among yourselves like a swarm of bees. **44**No one can come to me unless my Father who sent me makes him want to come to me. And I'm the one who will raise him back to Life on the last Day.

45"There's a place in the prophets where it says, 'God will teach everyone'.⁺ And everyone who listens to my Father, and pays attention to what he hears, will come to me. **46**I'm not saying that anyone has ever seen my Father except the One who lives with God. Certainly He has seen My Father!"

47"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who believes- has eternal Life. **48**And I am the living Bread. **49**Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert and died. **50**But this is the Bread which is coming down out of heaven, so that a person can eat it and not die. **51**I am this living Bread who has come down out of heaven. If a person eats this Bread, he will live forever. And the Bread is my own body,* which I will give so that the world can have Life."

52Now the Jews* began to argue angrily among themselves. "How can this fellow give us his body to eat?" they asked.

53And Jesus answered, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that if you don't eat the Son of Man's body and drink His blood, you will have no Life in your bodies. **54**The person who feeds on my body and drinks my blood has eternal Life; and I will raise him back to Life on the last Day. **55**You see, my body is real food, and my blood is real drink. **56**The person who eats my body and drinks my blood is living in me, and I'm living in him.* **57**My living Father sent me, and I'm living because of Him. And in the same way the person who feeds on me will live because of me. **58**This is the Bread which has come down out of heaven. It's not like the bread our forefathers ate and then died. The person who eats this Bread will live forever." **59**Jesus told them all this while He was explaining the Bible* to them in a meeting house* in Capernaum.

Some of Jesus' Followers Leave Him

60When Jesus' followers heard this speech, a lot of them said, "It's hard to understand what He's talking about."

Others said, "Who is able to follow him?"

61But since Jesus knew that His followers were all grumbling about this among themselves, He said to them, "Is this making you lose your faith? **62**What if you should see the Son of Man going back up to the place where He was before? *

63"It's God's Spirit who fills us with Life, and our sinful mind and body* does nothing to help. Those words I spoke to you are both Spirit and Life. **64**But there are some of you who don't believe me." You see, Jesus knew from the beginning who the ones were who didn't believe, and who the one was who was going to hand Him over to His enemies. **65**And then He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless my Father gives him the power".*

66But this was the reason why a lot of Jesus' followers went back home and didn't travel around with Him any more.

67So Jesus said to the twelve, "You men don't want to leave also, do you?"

68And Simon Peter answered, "Lord who shall we go to? You have the message that gives eternal Life. **69**And besides, we believe - yes, we know that You are the One God has chosen."

70Jesus replied, "Didn't I choose you twelve men? And one of you is a devil." **71**He was talking about Judas, who was Simon's son, from Kerioth. You see, even though he was one of the twelve, this was the man who was going to hand Jesus over to His enemies.

Jesus and His Brothers

Fall, 28

7 After this Jesus traveled around in Galilee, You see, He didn't want to travel around in Judea, because the Jews were trying to find a way to kill Him.

2But when it got close to the time for the Jewish "Tent Festival",* **3**Jesus' brothers said to Him, "You must leave here and go to Judea, so that your followers there can also see the things you're doing. **4**After all, no one does anything in secret if he wants to be well-known. Since you're doing these things, you must let the world see you." **5**But the truth is that not even Jesus' brothers believed in Him.

6So Jesus told them, "It isn't the right time yet for me to go, but any time is all right for you. **7**The world* can't hate you, but they do hate me, because I keep

telling them that the things they're doing are wicked. ⁸You go up to the festival. I'm not going up to this festival right now, because the right time hasn't come yet for me to go" ⁹And after this conversation Jesus stayed there in Galilee.

Jesus Arrives at the Festival

¹⁰But after His brothers and gone up to the festival, Jesus went up too. However He didn't go with the crowds, but traveled all by Himself.

¹¹The Jews of course were looking for Him at the festival, and they kept asking, "Where is that fellow?" ¹²And the crowds of people were all talking about Him quietly among themselves.

Some of them were saying, "He's a good man."

But others were saying, "No he's not. He's fooling the people, and leading them astray."

¹³Nobody however would talk about Him openly, because they were afraid of the Jews.

¹⁴But the festival was already half over when Jesus went up into the Temple-yard* and began to explain the Bible* to the people.

¹⁵And the Jews were astonished at this. "How does this fellow know all these things?" they asked. "He's never been a student of any of the rabbis".

¹⁶Jesus therefore gave them this answer. "I'm not teaching people my own ideas. They come from the One who sent me. ¹⁷If anyone wants to do what He wants, that person will know whether what I'm teaching comes from God or whether it's something I made up myself. ¹⁸The man who talks about things he has made up himself is looking for his own glory and honor. But the Man who is trying to give glory and honor to the One who sent him is the Man who is telling the truth, and there isn't anything dishonest about him.

¹⁹"Didn't Moses give you the Law? And yet there isn't a single one of you who is doing what the Law

says. So why are you trying to kill me?"

20Then the people in the crowd answered, "You have a demon inside of you. Who's trying to kill you?"

21And Jesus replied, "I did one miracle and you're all astonished. **22**You always circumcise* a child on Saturday,* because Moses told you to circumcise your children. Of course circumcision didn't start with Moses. It started with our forefathers.* **23**But since a person is circumcised on Saturday, so that Moses' Law won't be broken, are you going to be angry with me because I made a man's whole body well on Saturday? **24**Stop making judgments that are based on how things look to you. Instead, judgments must be based on what is right in God's sight."

Is He or Isn't He the Promised Savior?

25Now some of the people who lived in Jerusalem were saying, "This is the fellow they're trying to kill, isn't it? **26**But look at him! He's talking right out in the open where everyone can hear him, and they're not saying one word to him. Surely the members of the Council* haven't found out that this fellow is really the Messiah,* have they?"

27And some of the others, said, "No, we know where this fellow comes from. But when the Messiah comes, nobody will know where He comes from".*

28And then while Jesus was explaining the Bible to the people in the Temple-yard,* He raised His voice and said, "You people know me. And you know where I come from. And you know that it wasn't I who made up my mind that I should come. There really is someone who sent me, but you people don't know Him. **29** I know Him, because I live with Him, and He's the One who sent me."

30When He said that, the Jews* began to look for a way to arrest Jesus; but nobody laid a hand on Him, because His time hadn't come yet. **31**But there were many people there in the crowd who had come to believe in Him. And they were saying, "When the Messiah

comes, He won't do more miracles than this fellow has done, will he?"

The Jews Try to Arrest Jesus

32The Pharisees heard what the people in the crowd were saying about Jesus. And so they and the head priests sent some temple policemen to arrest Him.

33And Jesus told them, "I'll be with you for just a little while longer, and then I'll be going back to the One who sent me. **34**Then you'll be looking for me, and you won't find me, because you people can't come to the place where I'll be."

35That got the Jews started talking among themselves. One of them said, "Where is this fellow going to go, so that we won't find him? You don't think He's going to go and live among the Greek-speaking Jews who are scattered in the other countries, and explain the Bible to them, do you?"

And another one said, **36**"What did he mean when he said, 'You'll be looking for me, because you people can't come to the place where I'll be'?"

Rivers of Living Water

37The last day of the festival was the big day. And that day Jesus stood in the Temple-yard and shouted so that everyone could hear Him, "If anyone is thirsty, he must come to me and drink! **38**For the Bible was talking about the person who believes in me, where it says - 'There will be rivers of living water flowing out of his heart'."⁺ **39**When He said this, He was talking about the Spirit, who would be given to those who believe in Him. You see, the Spirit wasn't here yet, because Jesus hadn't gone back to heaven yet to be seated in His place of glory and honor.

40When the people in the crowd heard this, some of them said, "This fellow really is the Prophet".⁺

41Others said, "This fellow is the Messiah".

And others said, "But the Messiah isn't coming from

Galilee, is He? ⁴²Doesn't the Bible say that the Messiah is coming from 'the family of David',⁺ and 'from Bethlehem',⁺ the village where David lived?" ⁴³So the people had many different ideas about Jesus. ⁴⁴And there were some of them who wanted to arrest Him; but no one laid a hand on Him.

⁴⁵So when the temple policemen came back,* the head priests and the Pharisees asked them, "Why didn't you bring him back?"

⁴⁶And they answered, "No human being has ever talked the way this man does."

⁴⁷The Pharisees replied, "You men haven't been fooled and led astray also, have you? ⁴⁸No member of the Council has ever come to believe in him, or any of the Pharisees. ⁴⁹It's only this mob of people who don't know anything about the Bible, and they're all going to hell."

⁵⁰But Nicodemus, who was one of the Pharisees, and who had gone to see Jesus earlier, said to them, ⁵¹"Our Law doesn't condemn a man without first hearing what he has to say and finding out what he has done, does it?"

⁵²But the others answered, "You aren't from Galilee too, are you? Study the Bible and see for yourself that the Prophet* isn't going to come from Galilee".*

Jesus is the Light of the World

8 ¹²That evening Jesus spoke to the people again. "I AM*the Light of this world," He said. "The person who follows me will never live in the darkness, but he will have the living Light".*

¹³Then the Pharisees* said to Him, "You're just telling people about yourself. What you say doesn't have to be accepted as true".*

¹⁴Jesus answered, "Even if I am telling people about myself, what I'm saying is true, because I know where I came from, and where I'm going. But you don't know where I came from or where I'm going. ¹⁵You're making

your judgments the way sinful human beings do, but I'm not judging anyone right now. ¹⁶But even if I was judging someone, my judgment would be true and correct, because I'm not the only witness. Besides myself, there's my Father who sent me. ¹⁷And in your own Law, it says that the statements of two persons must be accepted as true.* ¹⁸So I'm telling people about myself; and my Father who sent me is also telling people about me."

¹⁹Then they said to Him. "Where is your father?"

And Jesus answered, "You don't know me or my Father. If you knew me, you would also know my Father." ²⁰This conversation took place while Jesus was explaining the Bible* to the people in the Women's Court,* where the collection boxes* were located. But no one arrested Him, because His time hadn't come yet.

Jesus Tells the People Who He Is

²¹Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I'm going away, and you're going to be looking for me; and you're going to die in your sins. You people can't come to the place where I'm going."

²²When they heard this, the Jews* said, "He isn't going to kill himself, is he? Is this what he means when he says, 'You people can't come to the place where I'm going'?"

²³Then Jesus said to them, "You people belong to the earth, down here; I belong to heaven, up there. You belong to this world;* I don't belong to this world. ²⁴That's why I told you that you're going to die in your sins. You see, if you don't believe that I AM,* you'll die in your sins."

²⁵So then they asked, "Just who are you?"

And Jesus replied, "I told you that in the beginning. Why should I even talk to you people? ²⁶ I have a lot of things to say about you people and condemn you for. But the One who sent me always speaks the truth; and I'm telling the world only the things I have

heard from Him."

27But they didn't understand that He was talking to them about His Father. **28**So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man,* then you will know that I AM. And you will also know that I'm not doing anything on my own, but I'm saying just what my Father has taught me to say. **29**And the One who sent me is always with me. He hasn't left me alone, because I'm always doing the kind of things that please Him." **30**And while He was talking, a lot of people came to believe in Him.

Jesus Tells the People Who They Are

31Therefore Jesus told those Jews who did believe in Him, "You are my true followers if you keep on believing what I tell you, and living the way I tell you to live. **32**And then you will also know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33But they answered, "We're Abraham's children, and we have never been anybody's slaves. How can you say to us, 'You're going to be free'?"

34Jesus replied, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that everyone who keeps on sinning is a slave of sin. **35**And a slave doesn't remain in the family forever. A son however is always a member of the family. **36**And so if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

37"I know that you're Abraham's children, but you're trying to kill me, because you won't believe what I say. **38**I'm talking about the things I saw when I was with my Father. And you people are doing the things you have heard from your father."

39They answered, "Abraham is our father."

And Jesus replied, "If you really are Abraham's children, you would be doing the same things Abraham did. **40** I have told you the truth which I heard from God, and now you're trying to kill me. Abraham would never do such a thing as that. **41**You people are doing the same things your father does."

They answered, "We aren't illegitimate children. The only Father we have is God."

42And Jesus said to them, "If God really is your Father, you would love me, because I came from God, and here I am. After all, it wasn't I who got the idea that I should come, but He sent me.

43"Do you know why it is that you don't understand what I'm talking about? It's because you can't stand to listen to what I'm saying. **44**Your father is the Devil; and you always want to do the sinful things your father wants. He was a murderer from the very beginning. And he has never had anything to do with the truth, because there can't be any truth in him. When he tells a lie, he's only doing what's natural for him, because he's a liar and the father of lies. **45**And so you don't believe me, because I'm telling the truth.

46"Which one of you can prove that I'm guilty of any sin? And since I'm telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? **47**Anyone who is God's child listens to what God says. And the reason why you people aren't listening is that you're not God's children."

Jesus Tells the People Again Who He Is

48The Jews answered, "Aren't we right when we say that you're a Samaritan, and that you have a demon inside of you?"

49Jesus replied, "I don't have a demon inside of me. Instead, I'm honoring my Father, and you people are dishonoring me. **50**I'm really not trying to get glory and honor for myself. But there is someone who's trying to get it for me, and He's the judge of what I'm doing. **51**I'm telling you the truth when I say that if a person believes and does what I tell him, he will never see death - never!"

52Then the Jews* said to Him, "Now we know that you have a demon inside of you. Abraham died, and so did the prophets. And you're saying, 'If a person believes and does what I tell him, he will never die - never!' **53**You certainly aren't greater than our father

Abraham, who died, are you? Or greater than the prophets who died? Who are you claiming to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I praise myself, that's no honor at all. But my Father is the one who is honoring me. He's the one you're talking about when you say, 'He's our God'. **55** But you have never known Him. I'm the one who knows Him. And if I were to say that I don't know Him, I would be a liar, just like you people. But I do know Him, and I believe and do what He tells me. **56** Your father Abraham was filled with joy because he saw me coming into the world. Yes, he saw that, and it made him happy."

57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You aren't even fifty years old, and Abraham saw you?"

58 And Jesus said, "I'm telling you the truth when I say that before Abraham was born, I AM".*

59 When He said this, the Jews brought in stones to kill Him, but Jesus hid himself in the crowd and left the Temple-grounds.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Was Born Blind

9 As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man who had been blind ever since he was born. **2** And His followers asked Him, "Rabbi, why was this man born blind? Was it because he sinned, or because his parents sinned?"

3 Jesus answered, "This man didn't sin, and neither did his parents. But he was born blind so that everyone can see what God can do. **4** As long as the daylight lasts we must keep on doing the things the One who sent me wants us to do. The night is coming, when no one will be able to work. **5** But while I'm in the world I AM the Light of the world".*

6 And after He said this, Jesus spit on the ground and made some mud from the saliva. Then He smeared the mud on the man's eyes, **7** and said to him, "Go and wash that off in the Siloam Pool." (The word "Siloam" means "sent").*

So the man went and washed; and when he came

back, he could see.

8Many of the people who lived in Jerusalem had seen this man before, because he had been a beggar. And so when these people and his neighbors saw him, they were all saying, "Isn't this the fellow who was always sitting in the street begging?"

9And some of them said, "Yes, this is the fellow!"

But others said, "No, it isn't. But he sure looks like him."

But the man himself said, "I certainly am!"

10Then they asked him, "What happened to your eyes so that you can see?"

11And he answered, "A man by the name of Jesus made some mud and smeared it on my eyes; and then He said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash it off!' And when I went and washed it off, I could see."

12"And where is this fellow?" they asked.

And the man replied, "I don't know."

What the Pharisees said about this Miracle

13Then they brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees,* **14**because Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes on Saturday.* **15**So the Pharisees also asked the man again what had happened so that he could see.

And he answered, "He put some mud on my eyes, and I washed it off, and now I can see."

16Then some of the Pharisees said, "This man can't possibly have come from God, because he doesn't keep our day of rest."

But some of the others said, "How can a sinful man be doing miracles like this?" And so they were divided into two groups, **17**and started to talk to the blind man again. "What do you say about this man? Are you saying that He opened your eyes?"

And he answered, "He's a prophet."

18The Jews* however wouldn't believe that the man had been blind, and had regained his sight, until they had called the man's parents **19**and questioned them. "Is this fellow your son?" they asked. "And will you give us your word that he was born blind? And if so, what happened, so that he can see now?"

20And his parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. **21**But we don't know what happened so that he can see now; and we certainly don't know who fixed his eyes so that he can see. Ask him. He's a grown man. He'll have to speak for himself." **22**His parents answered like this because they were afraid of the Jews. You see, the Jews had already agreed that anyone who said he believed that Jesus is the Messiah* would be thrown out of their meeting houses. **23**And this was why his parents said, "He's a grown man. Ask him."

24So then the Pharisees called the man who had been blind back a second time and said to him, "Give the glory and honor to God. We know that this man Jesus is a sinner."

25And the man answered, "I don't know if he's a sinner or not. But I know one thing, that I was blind, and now I can see."

26Then they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he fix your eyes so that you can see?"

27And he answered, "I've already told you, and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You men certainly don't want to become his followers also, do you?"

28Then the Pharisees cursed him and insulted him and said, "You are that fellow's follower. We're Moses' followers. **29**We know that God spoke to Moses. But we don't know where this fellow comes from."

30The man replied, "Well, this is really an astonishing thing, that you men don't know where He comes from after He fixed my eyes, so that I can see. **31**We know that God doesn't hear the prayers of sinners. But He

does hear the prayers of the person who worships Him and does what He wants. ³²Since the world began, no one has ever heard of anyone fixing the eyes of a man who was born blind, so that he can see. ³³If this fellow didn't come from God, he couldn't do anything."

³⁴And they answered, "You were born a completely sinful creature. Are you trying to teach us?" And then they threw him out of the meeting house.

Jesus Talks about Spiritual Blindness

³⁵When Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the man out, He looked for the man until He found him, and said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

³⁶And the man answered, "Sir, if you'll tell me who He is, I'll believe in Him."

³⁷And Jesus replied, "You have already seen Him, and it's the man who is talking with you right now."

³⁸And then the man said, "Lord, I do believe." And he fell on his knees in front of Jesus with his forehead on the ground.*

³⁹Then Jesus said to him, "I have come into this world to divide it, so that those who can't see will see, and those who see will become blind."

⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees were there with Jesus and heard this, and they said to Him, "You don't mean that we are also blind, do you?"

⁴¹And Jesus replied, "If you were really blind, you wouldn't have any sin. But now that you keep on saying, 'We can see,' you're still sinful people."

Jesus' Story about the Sheep Pen

¹⁰ "I'm telling you the truth when I say that the man who doesn't use the gate to get into the sheep pen, but climbs over the fence at some other place, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who uses the gate to get in is one of the shepherds* of the flock. ³When

he comes to the pen, the gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to him as he calls his own sheep, each one by name, and leads them out of the pen. ⁴And when he has them all outside, he walks along ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice.

⁵"But they will never follow a stranger. Instead, they will run away from him, because they don't recognize strangers' voices."

⁶This was the little story Jesus told; but those people didn't understand what He was telling them.

Jesus Is the Gate

⁷So Jesus talked to those people again. "I'm telling you the truth," He said, "when I say that I AM the Gate* for the sheep. ⁸All the others who came before me were thieves and robbers; but the sheep didn't listen to them. ⁹I AM the Gate. If anyone goes in through me, he will be safe; and he will go in and out and find food.

¹⁰"A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that the sheep can have Life, and have it in all its fullness.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

¹¹"I AM the good Shepherd. A good shepherd will lay down his life for his sheep. ¹²A hired man isn't really a shepherd, because the sheep don't belong to him. And so when he sees a wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away; and the wolf catches the sheep, and scatters the flock in all directions. ¹³He acts like this because he's a hired man, and he doesn't care anything about the sheep.

¹⁴"I AM the good Shepherd. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me, ¹⁵in the same way that my Father knows me, and I know my Father. And I'm going to lay down my life for my sheep.

¹⁶"And I also have other sheep, which don't belong to this sheep pen; and I must take care of them too.

And they will listen to me as I talk to them. And so they will all be one flock, with one shepherd.

17"My Father loves me because I'm going to lay down my life, so that I can take it back again. **18**No one is going to take my life away from me, but I'm going to lay it down willingly. I have the authority to lay down my life, and I have the authority to take it back again. This is what my Father has ordered me to do."

19Once again these words of Jesus divided the Jews* into two groups. **20**A lot of them said, "He has a demon inside of him," or "He's crazy. Why do you listen to him?"

21But others were saying, "A man who has a demon inside of him certainly can't talk like this."

And others said, "A demon can't fix the eyes of blind people so that they can see, can he?"

Jesus Again Tells the Jews Who He Is December, 28

22Then the time came to celebrate the Rededication Festival* in Jerusalem, in the winter.

23And Jesus was walking around in the Temple-grounds,* in the covered walkway that was called "Solomon's Walk", **24**when the Jews* surrounded Him.

"How long are you going to keep us up in the air?" they said. "If you really are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

25Jesus answered, "I have told you, but you don't believe me. The things I'm doing by my Father's power and authority tell you who I am. **26**But you people don't believe me because you don't belong to my flock.

27"My sheep listen to me as I talk to them, and I know them, and they follow me. **28**And I'm giving them eternal Life, so that they will never be lost - never! And no one will ever snatch them out of my hand. **29**My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than everything; and no one is strong enough to snatch them out of my Father's hand. **30**And my Father and I are one."

31 And when He said this, the Jews again brought in stones to kill him.

32 But Jesus answered, "I have shown you a lot of good things I have learned from my Father. For which one of these things are you going to stone me?"

33 And the Jews answered, "We aren't going to stone you for any good thing. We're going to stone you for insulting God, because you, who are just a human being, are claiming to be God."

34 Jesus replied, "Doesn't God say in your Holy Book, 'I said, "You are gods"?'⁺ **35** And no one can change or erase what the Bible says. So if it's true that God called those people to whom He was speaking 'gods', **36** are you people going to say, 'You're insulting God,' because I said, 'I'm God's Son,' when my Father has chosen me to serve Him and sent me into the world?"

37 "If it's true that I'm not doing the kind of things my Father would do, don't believe me. **38** But since I am doing them, even though you don't believe me, you must believe what they tell you, so that you will know once and for all that my Father is in me, and I am in my Father."

39 Once again, therefore, the Jews tried to find some way to arrest Jesus, but He slipped through their hands.

Jesus Stays around the Jordan River

40 Then Jesus left Jerusalem and went back across the Jordan River to the place where John was when he started baptizing.* And since He stayed there for a while, **41** a lot of people went out to see Him. They were saying, "John never did any miracle, but everything he said about this man was true." **42** So a lot of people came to believe in Jesus while He was there.

Jesus Learns that His Friend Lazarus is Sick

11 At this same time there was a man named Lazarus who was sick. He lived in the village of Bethany* with his sisters Mary and Martha.* ² Mary was the

woman who poured the perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them off with her hair. ³The two sisters therefore sent Jesus a message - "Lord, we have to tell You that Your friend whom You love is sick."

⁴When Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness isn't anything serious, but it will bring glory and honor to God by bringing glory and honor to God's Son."

⁵And although Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶He stayed there where He was for two days after He heard that Lazarus was sick. ⁷And then after the two days He said to His followers, "Let's go back to Judea."

⁸They answered, "Rabbi,* just a short time ago the Jews were trying to kill You with stones. Are You going to go back there again?"

⁹Jesus replied, "Isn't the day twelve hours long? If a person walks around in the daytime, he doesn't stumble, because in the daylight he can see. ¹⁰But if he walks around at night, he stumbles, because he doesn't have any light." ¹¹And then He added, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, but I'm going to Bethany to wake him up."

¹²His followers therefore said to Him, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he's going to get well." ¹³You see, Jesus had been talking about Lazarus' death, but they thought He was talking about the usual kind of sleep.

¹⁴So then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵And for your sake I'm glad that I wasn't there, so that you will really believe. But now we must go and see him."

¹⁶Then Thomas, who was called "the twin", said to the rest of the followers, "Let's all go with Him, so that we also can die with Him."

Jesus Speaks about the Resurrection and the Life

¹⁷When Jesus got there, He found that Lazarus had already been in the grave four days.

¹⁸And since Bethany was close to Jerusalem, a little

less than two miles away, ¹⁹a lot of the Jews had come out to see Martha and Mary, and to talk to them about their brother and comfort them.

²⁰But as soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him, while Mary stayed there in the house. ²¹And when she met Jesus, Martha said to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give You whatever You ask Him for."

²³Jesus answered, "Your brother will come back to life again."

²⁴And Martha replied, "I know that he will come back to life again in the resurrection, when all the dead come back to life on the last Day."

²⁵Then Jesus said to her, "I AM*the Resurrection, and the Life. The person who believes in me will live even though he dies, ²⁶and every living person who believes in me will never die - never! Do you believe this?"

²⁷"Yes, Lord," Martha said, "I believe that You are the Messiah, God's Son, who was going to come into the world."

Jesus Brings Lazarus back to Life

²⁸And as soon as she said this, Martha went back to the house and signalled to her sister Mary that she wanted to talk to her. And when Mary came to her, Martha whispered to her, "Our Teacher* is here; and He wants to see you."

²⁹As soon as Mary heard that, she jumped up right away and went to see Him.

³⁰But Jesus hadn't gotten into town yet. In fact He was still at the place where Martha had met Him. ³¹And when the Jews who were in the house with Mary, comforting her, saw that Mary got up so quickly and ran out, they followed her. They thought she was going out to the grave to cry and mourn there.

³²And when Mary came to the place where Jesus

was, she took one look at Him and fell down on the ground at His feet. "Lord," she said, "if You had been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

33When Jesus saw Mary crying and sobbing, and the Jews who had come with her also crying and sobbing, He was so choked up with sorrow that He could hardly control Himself. **34**"Where have you buried him?" He asked.

And they answered, "Come, Lord, we'll show You."
35Then Jesus began to cry.

36And when the Jews saw Him, some of them said, "See how much He loved him."

37And some of the others said, "This is the man who fixed the blind man's eyes so that he could see. Couldn't he have done something so that Lazarus wouldn't die?"

38When Jesus came to the grave therefore, He was all choked up with sorrow again. The grave was a cave, and there was a stone lying in front of the mouth of the cave.

39"Take away that stone!" said Jesus.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, said, "Lord, by this time there will be an awful smell, because this is the fourth day."

40Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you have faith, you will see God's wonderful heavenly power?"

41So they took away the stone. And then Jesus looked up into the sky and said, "Father, I thank You for hearing me. **42** I have known all along that You always hear me. But I said this because of all these people who are standing around me here, so that they will believe that You have sent me."

43And after He said this, He shouted as loud as He could, "Lazarus! Come out!"

44And out came the dead man! His feet and hands were still wrapped with the strips of cloth that were wound around the body to get it ready for burial, and

the face cloth was still tied over his face.*

Then Jesus said to them, "Take off the cloths and let him go home."

The Jews Begin Their Plans to Kill Jesus

45When the Jews* who had come to visit Mary saw what Jesus had done now, a lot of them came to believe in Him. **46**But some of them went back to the Pharisees* and told them what Jesus had done.

47So the head priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.* "What are we going to do?" they said. "After all, this fellow is doing a lot of miracles. **48**If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in Him, and then the Romans will come and destroy our land* and our nation."

49Then one of them whose name was Caiaphas spoke up.* He was the Head Priest that year. "You men don't know anything at all," he said. **50**"Don't you realize that it's better for you if one man dies for the people, so that the whole nation won't be destroyed?" **51**Of course, what he said wasn't really Caiaphas' own idea. But since he was the Head Priest that year, he spoke as a prophet,* saying that Jesus was going to die to save the nation. **52**And not only the nation of Israel. He was going to bring together God's children who are scattered all over the world and make them one nation. **53**So from that day on the Jewish leaders began to make plans to kill Jesus.

54And therefore Jesus didn't travel around openly among the Jews any more. Instead, He left that district and went to a city by the name of Ephraim, which was on the edge of the desert; and he stayed there for a while with His followers.

Jesus is Anointed in Bethany

Spring, 29

55But now the Jewish Passover festival was getting close; and lots of the people from the country areas had already gone up to Jerusalem before the Passover to make themselves "clean".* **56**And of course they

were all looking for Jesus. So as they stood around in the Temple-yard,* they were asking one another, "What do you think? You don't think he'll come to the festival, do you?" ⁵⁷You see, the head priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he must report it, so that they could arrest Jesus.

12 Six days before the Passover, however, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. He was the man Jesus had raised from the dead. ²And so they put on a dinner for Jesus there. Martha was serving the dinner, and Lazarus was one of those who were eating at Jesus' table.* ³And Mary took a pint of very expensive perfume, made out of pure nard,* and poured it on Jesus' feet, and then wiped them off with her hair. And the sweet smell of the perfume filled the whole house.

⁴One of Jesus' followers was Judas from Kerioth. He was the one who was going to hand Jesus over to His enemies. And when he saw what Mary had done, he said, ⁵"Why didn't she sell this perfume for 300 dinars* and give the money to the poor?" ⁶But Judas didn't say this because he cared anything about the poor. He said it because he was a thief. He was the treasurer of the group, and he had been taking some of the money for himself.

⁷So Jesus said to him, "Leave her alone, so that she can keep this perfume for my burial.*" ⁸You see, you'll always have poor people in your group, but you won't always have me."

The Plot Against Lazarus

⁹There was a large crowd of Jews in Bethany at this time, because they had found out that Jesus was there. But they didn't go only because of Jesus. They also went because they wanted to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

¹⁰So the head priests made plans to kill Lazarus also, ¹¹because he was the reason why many of the

Jews were turning away from them, and were believing in Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem in Triumph

12The next day the large crowd of people who had come for the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. **13**So they took branches from the palm trees and went out to meet Him. They were shouting,

" 'Save us, Lord!

God's blessings on the one who comes
as the Lord's messenger"⁺—
the King of Israel!"

14And Jesus had found a young donkey, and was riding on it, just as the Bible says -

15 "Daughter of Zion, you mustn't be afraid.

Look! Your King is coming,
sitting on a young donkey."⁺

16Jesus' followers didn't understand all this at first. But when Jesus had gone back to heaven to be seated in the place of glory and honor, they remembered that the Bible does say all these things about Him, and that the people had done all these things for Him.

17And all the people who had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead, kept on telling others what had happened.

18And therefore that crowd of people went out to meet Jesus, because they had heard that He had done this miracle.

19But when the Pharisees saw all this, they said to each other, "You can see that you're not accomplishing anything. Look! The whole world is running after Him."

Jesus Tells His Followers He's Going to Die

20There were also some Greeks among the people who had come to Jerusalem to worship at the festival.

21So these people came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

22So Philip went and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

23And Jesus answered, "The time has come for the Son of Man* to be given His place of glory and honor.

24I'm telling you the truth when I say that unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many grains of wheat.

25"The person who loves his life will lose it, but the person who hates his life in this world will keep it until it becomes eternal Life.

26"If a person is going to be my servant, he must follow me. And so my servant will always be where I am. And if a person is working as my servant, my Father will honor him.

27"Right now my heart is worried and upset. But what am I going to say? Should I say, 'Father, save me from what's going on now?' No, indeed! What's going on now is the reason why I have come here. **28**All I can say is, 'Father, bring glory and honor to Yourself'."

And just then a voice came out of the sky. "I have already brought glory and honor to myself," it said, "and I will do it again."

29When the crowd that was standing there heard this, some of them said it had thundered. Others said, "An angel spoke to him."

30But Jesus answered, "This voice spoke for your benefit, not mine.

31"Now the time has come for this world to be judged. The time has come when the ruler of this world will be thrown out. **32**And when I'm lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men and women to myself." **33**He said this to let people know how He was going to die.

34But the crowd answered, "We have learned from God's Word that the Messiah* is going to stay here forever. So how can you say that the Son of Man

has to be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"

35 Jesus answered, "The Light is going to be here in your midst for just a little while longer. You must keep on walking while you have the Light, so that the darkness won't swallow you up. The person who walks in the darkness doesn't know where he's going.

36 While you have the Light you must believe in the Light, so that you will be children of Light." And when He finished speaking, Jesus left the Temple-grounds and went to a place where the people couldn't find Him.

The Unbelief of the Jews

37 Even though Jesus had done so many miracles right in front of their very eyes, the people of Jerusalem never believed in Him, **38** so that what the prophet Isaiah said came true -

"Lord, who has believed our message,
and to whom has the Lord revealed His power?"⁺

39 But there's a reason why they couldn't believe in Him, and Isaiah tells us what it is in another place, where he says,

40 "He has made their eyes blind,
and has turned their minds to stone,
so that they won't see anything with their eyes,
or understand anything with their minds,
and turn to Me,
so that I will heal them".⁺

41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' shining heavenly beauty and spoke about Him.

42 However even among the members of the Council* there were many who did come to believe in Jesus, but they didn't say so publicly, because they were afraid that the Pharisees would throw them out of their meeting houses. **43** You see, they loved the glory and honor men could give them more than the glory and honor God could give them.

John Sums up Jesus' Message to the Jews

44But Jesus had shouted His message to them - "The person who believes in me isn't believing only in me, but in the one who sent me.* **45**And the person who sees me is seeing the one who sent me.

46"I'm here in the world as a Light,* so that everyone who believes in me won't be living in the darkness.*

47"And if someone hears what I'm saying and doesn't do it, I'm not sentencing him to death, because I didn't come to judge the world, but to save the world.* **48**But there is something that will pronounce the death sentence on the person who rejects me and doesn't accept what I have to say. The message I have spoken will sentence that person to death on the last Day.*

49"You see, I haven't spoken about things that I have made up myself. No indeed! My Father who sent me gave me my orders about what I should say and what I should talk about.* **50**And I know that what He orders me to say brings eternal Life. Therefore the things I'm talking about are exactly the things my Father has told me".*

Jesus Shows His Apostles What Humility Is

13 Before the Passover Festival* began, Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go back to His Father. And because He had loved those who were His own here in this world, He loved them to the very end.

2The Passover dinner* was just beginning, and the devil had already put the thought into Judas' heart that he should hand Jesus over to His enemies. Judas was Simon's son, from Kerioth.* **3**And Jesus knew that His Father had put everything into His hands,* and that He had come from God and was going back to God. **4**So He got up from the table and took off His long outer cloak and His shirt. And then He took a servant's apron and tied it around His waist, **5**and put some water in the big washpan, and began to wash

His followers' feet, and wipe them off with the apron around His waist.

6When He came to Simon Peter, Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet?"

7Jesus answered, "Right now you don't know what I'm doing, but you'll understand later."

8Peter replied, "You must never wash my feet - never!"

And Jesus answered, "If I don't wash you, you're not one of my followers."

9Then Peter said, "Lord, don't wash just my feet. Wash my hands and my head too."

10But Jesus replied, "When a person has taken a bath, he only has to wash his feet, because the rest of his body is clean. And you men are clean, but not all of you." **11**You see, Jesus knew who the man was who was going to hand Him over to His enemies. And this is why He said, "You're not all clean."

12When He had finished washing their feet therefore, Jesus put His clothes back on and took His place at the table again. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked. **13**"You men call me 'my Teacher' and 'my Lord'. And you're right, because I am. **14**And therefore since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you must also keep on washing each other's feet. **15**You see, I have given you this example, so that you will keep on doing the same thing that I have done for you.

16"I'm telling you the truth when I say that no slave can be greater than his master, and no messenger can be greater than the one who sends him. **17**And since you know these things, you'll be truly happy men if you keep on doing them.

18"I'm not talking now about all of you. I certainly know the men I have chosen; but I did it so that what the Bible says would come true -

'The man who is eating my food
has attacked me'.⁺

19"From now on I'm telling you about things before they happen, so that when they do happen, you will believe that I AM.*

20"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who receives the man I send is receiving me; and the person who receives me is receiving the one who sent me."

Jesus Warns Judas

21After Jesus finished speaking, He was all choked up with sorrow as He told them what He knew. "I'm telling you the truth," He said, "when I say that one of you is going to hand me over to my enemies."

22Then His followers began to look at one another, since they had no idea whom He was talking about.

23The one who was lying* closest to Jesus, so that his head was close to Jesus' chest, was the follower Jesus loved.* **24**So Simon Peter nodded to this man, asking him to find out who it was that Jesus was talking about.

25So that man put his head right on Jesus' chest and said to Jesus, "Lord, who is it?"

26Jesus answered, "It's the man I'm going to give this piece of bread to after I dip it in the dish." Then He dipped the piece of bread in the dish and gave it to Judas, Simon's son, who was from Kerioth. **27**And after Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered his heart.

And so Jesus said to Judas, "Do what you're going to do quickly."

28None of those who were at the table, however, understood why Jesus said this to him. **29**But since Judas was the treasurer of the group, some of them thought that Jesus was telling him to buy some things they needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor.

30So after Judas had eaten the piece of bread, he left the room at once. By now it was dark outside.

Jesus' New Commandment

31And when Judas had left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man will receive glory and honor, and bring God glory and honor by what he does. **32**Yes, by His own actions God will give him glory and honor, and He will do it soon.

33"My little children, I'm going to be with you just a little while longer, You're going to be looking for me; and just as I told the Jews, 'You people can't come to the place where I'm going'.*

34"I'm giving you a new commandment, that you must love one another. You must love one another in the same way that I have loved you. **35**And if you have this love for each other, everyone will know that you are my followers."

Jesus Warns Peter that He will Deny Him

36Then Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where are You going?"

Jesus answered, "You can't follow me now to the place where I'm going; but you'll follow me later."

37And Peter replied, "Lord, why can't I follow You right now? I'll lay down my life for You."

38And Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I'm telling you the truth when I say that before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me."

Jesus is the Only Road to Heaven

14 "You mustn't be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "You must keep on believing in God, and you must keep on believing in me. **2**There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I'm going to get your rooms ready for you. If this isn't true, do you think I would have told you this? **3**And since I'm going to get your rooms ready for you, I'm going to come back again and take you with me, so that you can also be where I am. **4**And you know the road that goes to the place where I'm going."

5Then Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where You're going. How can we know the road?"

6And Jesus replied, "I AM* the Road, and the Truth, and the Life. No one will come to my Father unless he comes through me. **7**Since you know me, you will also know my Father. And from now on, you do know Him, and you have seen Him."

8Then Philip said, "Lord, show us your Father and that will be enough for us."

9Jesus answered, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? When a person has seen me, he has seen my Father. How can you still be saying, 'Show us your Father'? **10**Don't you believe that I am in my Father and my Father is in me? These things I'm telling you aren't things that I have made up myself. My Father who is living in me is doing His work through me. **11**You must believe me when I say that I am in my Father, and my Father is in me. And if you don't, you must believe me because of the things I'm doing.

12"I'm telling you the truth when I say that the person who believes in me will also do the things I'm doing. Yes, he will do greater things than these, because I'm going back to my Father. **13**And I will do anything you ask as my followers, so that my Father will receive glory and honor through His Son. **14**Yes, I will do anything you ask me to do as my followers.

Jesus Tells Them about the Holy Spirit

15"If you love me, you must keep on doing all the things I have told you to do. **16**And I will ask my Father, and He will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. **17**I'm talking about the Spirit, who speaks the Truth. The world* can't receive Him, because it doesn't see Him or know Him. But you know Him, because He will be staying with you. Yes, He will be living in your hearts.

18"I'm not going to leave you as orphans, with no one to look after you. And I will come back to you.

19In just a little while the world won't see me any more, but you will be seeing me. And because I am living, you also will be living. **20**When that time comes, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*

21"The person who loves me is the one who has my commandments and tries to follow them. And my Father will love the person who loves me. And I will love him too, and will come to him so that he will see me."

22Then Judas (not the one from Kerioth)* said to Jesus, "Lord, why is it that we're going to see You, but the world won't?"

23Jesus answered, "If a person loves me, he will believe and do what I tell him; and my Father will love him; and we will come to him and live with him.

24The person who doesn't love me isn't going to believe and do what I tell him. And what you're hearing isn't coming from me, but from my Father who sent me.

25"I have told you these things while I was living here with you. **26**But my Father is going to send the Holy Spirit in my place to be your Helper. He will teach you everything, and remind you of everything that I have told you.

27"I'm going to send you peace,* and it's my own kind of peace I'll be giving you. And I don't give things the way the world does. You mustn't be worried and upset, and you mustn't be afraid.

28"You heard what I told you, that I'm going away, and then I'm going to come back to you. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I'm going to my Father, because my Father is greater than I. **29**And now I have told you all this before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe.

30"I won't be talking a lot with you any longer, because the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, **31**but I want the world to know that I love my Father, and that I always do exactly what my Father has ordered me to do.

"And now you must get up, because we have somewhere else to go."*

The Vine and the Branches

15 "I AM* the real Vine, and my Father is the farmer. **2**He cuts away every one of my branches that isn't bearing fruit, and He prunes every branch that is bearing fruit, so that it will bear more fruit.

3"You men are already 'pruned' by the things I have told you. **4**You must be living in me, and I must be living in you. A branch can't bear fruit by itself if it isn't living in the vine. And therefore neither can you bear any fruit if you aren't living in me. **5** I AM the Vine, and you are the branches.* It's the person who keeps on living in me, and I in him, who bears a lot of fruit, because if you're separated from me, you can't do anything.

6"If a person isn't living in me, he's like a branch that is cut out and dries up. And people gather such branches together and use them for firewood, and they're all burned up.

7"But if you keep on living in me, and my words keep on living in you, you can ask for anything you want and you'll get it. **8**And my Father receives glory and honor when you become my followers and bear a lot of fruit.

9"I have loved you in exactly the same way that my Father has loved me. So now you must try to live by my love. **10**And if you try to keep my commandments, you will be living by my love. That's the way it is with me. I have always kept my Father's commandments, so I'm always living by His love. **11** I have told you all this, so that you will make me happy, and so that you will be completely happy.

12"This is my commandment - you must love one another in the same way that I have loved you. **13**And the person who lays down his life for his friends has the greatest love of all.

14"And you are my friends if you keep on doing

the things I'm ordering you to do. ¹⁵I'm not calling you slaves any longer, because a slave doesn't know what his master is going to do. Now I'm calling you friends, because I have told you everything my Father has told me.

¹⁶"You didn't choose me, but I chose you. And I chose you to go and bear fruit, the kind of fruit that will last, so that my Father will give you whatever you ask Him for as my followers. ¹⁷So these are my orders to you - you must love one another!

The World will Hate You

¹⁸"Since the world hates you, you must remember that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as it loves its own people. But you don't belong to the world, because I have chosen you and taken you out of the world. And this is why the world hates you.

²⁰"Remember what I told you - 'There is no slave who is greater than his master'.* And therefore since they have tried to kill me, they will try to kill you too. If they had believed and done what I have told them, they would believe and do what you tell them too. ²¹But they will do all this to you because of me, and because they don't know the one who sent me.

²²"If I hadn't come and spoken to them, they wouldn't know about their sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³The person who hates me also hates my Father.

²⁴"They wouldn't know about their sin if I hadn't done the kind of things in their midst that no one else has ever done. But now they have seen all this, and they have come to hate both me and my Father. ²⁵But they did it so that what is written in their Holy Book would come true - 'They hated me for no reason at all'.⁺

²⁶"The Helper I'm going to send to you is the Spirit of Truth, who will come from my Father. And when He comes, He will tell people what He knows about

me. ²⁷But you must also be telling people what you know about me, because you have been with me from the beginning.

¹⁶"I'm telling you these things so that you won't be losing your faith in me. ²You're going to be thrown out of their meeting houses. And worse yet, the time will come when anyone who kills you will think that he's serving God. ³And they will do all these things because they have never known my Father or me. ⁴But I'm telling you this, so that when that time comes, you will remember that I warned you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

"I didn't tell you about these things at first, because I was with you. ⁵But now I'm going back to the one who sent me; and not a single one of you is asking me where I'm going. ⁶But because I'm telling you these things, your hearts are filled with sorrow.

⁷"But I'm telling you the truth when I say that it's better for you that I go away. You see, if I don't go away, your Helper won't come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He comes, He will talk to the people of the world about sin, and about what is right in God's sight, and about judgment. ⁹He'll talk to them about sin, and the fact that they don't believe in me. ¹⁰And He'll talk to them about what is right in God's sight, and the fact that I'm going back to my Father, and you won't see me any more. ¹¹And He'll talk to them about judgment and the fact that the ruler of this world is already sentenced to death.

¹²"I still have a lot of things to tell you, but they would be more than you can understand right now. ¹³But when the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. You see, He won't be talking about things that He has made up Himself. Instead, He will talk about the things He has heard, and He will tell you what's going to happen.

¹⁴"He will bring glory and honor to me, because He will take what I give Him and pass it on to you.

15Everything my Father has is mine. That's why I said that He will take what I give Him and pass it on to you.

Jesus Promises to Come Back Again

16"In a little while you won't be seeing me any more, and then a little later you will see me."

17When He said this, some of His followers said to one another, "What does this mean? He tells us, 'In a little while you won't be seeing me any more, and then a little later you will be seeing me'."

"Yes," said some of the others, "and what does He mean by saying, 'I'm going back to my Father'."

18And some others were saying, "And what does the 'little while' He's talking about mean? We don't know what He's talking about."

19Jesus of course, knew that they wanted to ask Him about this, and so He said to them, "Are you talking among yourselves about what I just said, 'In a little while you won't be seeing me; and then a little later you will see me?' **20**I'm telling you the truth when I say that you're going to be crying and wailing and moaning, but the world will be glad. Yes, you will be sad, but your sadness will turn into joy. **21**When a woman is giving birth to a child, she's in pain, because her time has come. But when the baby has been born, she no longer remembers the suffering, because she's so happy that her child is alive and healthy. **22**That's the way it is with you too. Now you're sad. But I'm going to see you again; and then your hearts will be filled with joy. And that joy of yours is something no one will take away from you.

23"When that time comes, you won't ask me for anything. I'm telling you the truth when I say that my Father will give you anything you ask Him for as my followers. **24**Up till now, you haven't asked for anything as my followers. Now you must be asking, and you'll get what you ask for, so that you will be completely happy.

25"I have used stories and illustrations to tell you these things. But the time is coming when I won't use stories and illustrations any more, but will tell you about my Father in plain words. **26**At that time you will ask for things as my followers. And I'm telling you that I won't ask my Father to do anything for you. **27**After all, my Father loves you, because you have come to love me, and you believe that I came from God. **28**Yes, I left my Father and came into the world. And now I'm leaving the world and going back to my Father."

29Then His followers said, "Look! Now You're talking to us in plain words, and You aren't using any kind of story or illustration. **30**Now we know that You know everything, so that a person doesn't even have to ask You a question. This is why we believe that You have come from God."

31Jesus answered, "You're saying that now you believe? **32**Listen to me! The time is coming - in fact, it's already here - that you're going to be scattered in all directions. Each one of you will run to his own home, and you'll leave me all alone. But I'm never really alone, because my Father is always with me.

33"I have told you these things so that you can have peace* as my followers. In this world you will have troubles; but be brave! I have conquered this world."

Jesus Prays to His Father in Heaven

17 After Jesus said this, He looked straight up and said, "Father, it's that time! Give glory and honor to Your Son, so that Your Son can bring glory and honor to You. **2**For You have given him authority over every living thing, so that he can give eternal Life to every creature You have given him. **3**And eternal Life for them is knowing You, the only true God, and the one whom You have sent (Jesus, the Messiah*).

4"I have finished the work You gave me to do, and by doing this I have brought You glory and honor here

on earth. ⁵And now Father, give me glory and honor by Your side by giving me the same glory and honor I had with You before the world began.

⁶"You have taken these men out of the world* and have given them to me; and I have told them all about You. They were Yours, and You gave them to me; and they have believed and done what You have told them. ⁷Now they know that everything You have given me really does come from You, ⁸because I have told them all the things You told me, and they have accepted what I told them. Yes, they really have learned that I have come from You, and they have come to believe that You are the one who sent me.

⁹"Now I'm praying for them. I'm not praying for the world, but for those people You have given to me, because they belong to You. ¹⁰But everything that is mine is Yours, and everything that is Yours is mine; and they have brought me glory and honor. ¹¹I won't be in the world any longer, because I'm coming back to You. But they will be in the world. Holy Father, keep them safe by Your power which You have given me, so that they may be one, just as we are.

¹²"While I was with them, I kept them safe by Your power which You gave me. I protected them, and not a single one of them was lost except the one who was born to be lost, so that what the Bible says would come true. ¹³But now I'm coming back to You, and I'm talking about these things while I'm still here in this world, so that they can have my joy in their hearts in all its fullness.

¹⁴"I have told them what You told me to say; and the world has come to hate them, because they don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world. ¹⁵I'm not asking You to take them out of the world. But I am asking You to keep them safe from the Evil One. ¹⁶They don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world. ¹⁷Make them Your holy servants by the truth. Your Word is the truth.

18"I have sent them into the world in the same way that You sent me into the world. **19**And for their sakes I am making myself Your holy servant, so that they also will be made Your holy servants by the truth.

20"I'm not praying only for these men, but also for those people who are going to believe in me because of what these men tell them. **21**Father, I'm praying that they all may be one, just as You are in me, and I am in You. I'm praying that they may also be in us,* so that the world will believe that You have really sent me. **22** I have given them the same glory and honor that You have given me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. **23** I am in them, and You are in me, and I'm praying that they may be perfectly united in one body.* And then the world will know that You have really sent me, and that You have loved them just as much as You have loved me.

24"Father, You are the one who has given them to me. And so I want these people also to be with me wherever I am, so that they can see the glory and honor which You gave me before the world was created, because You loved me.

25"Father, You always do what is right, but the world has never known You. But I know You; and these men have come to know that You really have sent me. **26** I have told them all about You. And I will keep on doing this, so that Your love for me will be in them, and I also will be in them".*

Jesus is Arrested in the Garden

18 When Jesus finished His prayer, He and His followers left the house and walked across the Kedron valley to a place where there was a garden. And when they got there, they all went in.

2Judas, the man who was going to hand Jesus over to His enemies, also knew about this place, because Jesus and His followers had met together there many times. **3**So Judas took a group of Roman soldiers and some temple policemen that he got from the head

priests and Pharisees, and went to the garden. The men were carrying torches, lamps and weapons.

⁴And since Jesus knew everything that was going to happen to Him, He went out and said to them, "Who are you looking for?"

⁵"Jesus the Nazorite",* they answered.

"I'm right here," said Jesus.

Judas, the man who was betraying Him, was also standing right there with them. ⁶But when Jesus said to them "I'm right here," they all backed away from Him, and fell down on the ground.

⁷So Jesus asked them the same question again, "Who are you looking for?"

And they answered, "Jesus the Nazorite".

⁸"I told you that I'm right here," said Jesus. "So if you're looking for me, let these men go." ⁹He said this so that what He had said before would come true - "I haven't lost a single one of those whom You have given me".*

¹⁰Simon Peter however had a sword. And so he drew his sword and swung it at the Head Priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

¹¹But then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword away. You don't think I'll refuse to drink the cup my Father has given me, do you?"

Jesus is Brought to Annas

¹²Then the commanding officer and his soldiers and the Jewish temple policemen arrested Jesus and tied Him up ¹³and led Him away. They took Him to Annas* first, because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the Head Priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the man who had told the Jews that it would be better to have one man die for the people.*

Annas Questions Jesus

19Annas therefore began to ask Jesus some questions about His followers, and about what He had been teaching the people.

20Jesus answered, "I have spoken plainly and clearly to everyone. I have always explained the Bible to the people in the meeting houses,* and in the Temple-yard,* where all the Jews come together. I have never said anything in secret. **21**Why are you asking me? Ask the people who heard me what I told them. Look! These men right here know what I said."

22When He said this, one of the temple policemen who was standing there beside Jesus slapped Him in the face and said to Him, "Is that the way you answer the Head Priest?"

23Jesus answered, "If I said something wrong you must tell everyone what it was; but since I gave a good answer, why are you hitting me?"

24So then Annas sent Jesus, who was still all tied up, to Caiaphas, the Head Priest.*

Peter Says that He Doesn't Know Jesus

15Simon Peter and another one of Jesus' followers were following Jesus. And since that other man* knew the Head Priest, he went right in with Jesus into the yard around the Head Priest's house. **16**But Peter was left standing outside by the gate. So the other follower, who knew the Head Priest, went out and talked to the girl at the gate and brought Peter in.

17The girl at the gate was one of the servants, and she said to Peter, "You aren't another one of this man's followers, are you?"

And Peter replied, "No I'm not."

18Because it was cold, the slaves and temple policemen had made a charcoal fire, and they were all standing around it, trying to keep themselves warm. And so Peter was also standing there with them, trying to keep himself warm.

25 Later on some of the people there said to Peter, "You aren't another one of his followers, are you?"

And Peter shook his head and said, "I am not!"

26 Then one of the Head Priest's slaves, who was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said to Peter, "Didn't I see you with him there in the garden?"

27 But again Peter said, "No!" And right away a rooster crowed.

Jesus is Brought to Pontius Pilate

28 It was just beginning to get light when they took Jesus from Caiaphas' house and brought Him to the governor's palace.* But the Jews didn't go inside the gate, because they wanted to keep themselves "clean"* so that they could eat the next Passover meal.*

29 So Pilate* went out into the street to talk to them. "What crime are you accusing this man of doing?" he asked.

30 And they answered, "If this man hadn't been doing something wrong, we wouldn't have brought him to you."

31 So Pilate said to them, "Then you take him and punish him according to your law."

Then the Jews told him, "It's against the law for us to kill anyone." **32** They said this so that what Jesus had told His followers earlier about the way He was going to die* would come true.

33 When Pilate heard that, he went back into the courtyard and had them bring Jesus to him. "Are you really the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked.

34 Jesus answered, "Did you think of this question by yourself, or did some other people talk to you about me?"

35 Pilate answered, "I'm certainly not a Jew am I?

Your own people and your head priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My Kingdom certainly isn't a part of this world. If my Kingdom did belong to this world, my servants would be fighting to keep me out of the hands of the Jews. But the truth is that my Kingdom certainly isn't here on earth!"

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Then you are a king, aren't you?"

And Jesus replied, "You're saying that I'm a king. I'm saying that I was born, and I have come into this world to tell people about the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to what I'm saying."

38 And Pilate said, "What is truth?"

Jesus is Sentenced to Death

And after Pilate said this, he went back out into the street to talk to the Jews again. "I don't find this man guilty of any crime at all," he said. **39** "But there's something I do for you every year. At the time of the Passover I set one man free for you. So do you want me to set the king of the Jews free for you?"

40 "No! No!" the crowd shouted back at him. "We don't want this fellow! We want Barabbas!" Barabbas was a man who was trying to overthrow the Roman government.

19 Then Pilate took Jesus into the courtyard and had Him whipped. **2** And after this the soldiers twisted some thorn branches together into a crown and put it on His head, and threw a purple cloak around Him. **3** And then they would come up to Him and say, "Good morning, King of the Jews," and give Him a slap in the face.

4 After this Pilate went out into the street again and said to the Jews, "Now look! I'm going to bring him out here to you, so that you will know that I don't find this man guilty of any crime at all." **5** And then

Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And Pilate said to them, "Look! Here's your man!"

6But when the head priests and the temple policemen saw Jesus, they began to shout, "Put him on a cross! Put him on a cross!"

And Pilate said to them, "You take him and put him on a cross, because I don't find him guilty."

7Then the Jews answered, "We have a law, and according to our law, he has to die, because he said he's God's Son."

8And when Pilate heard that, he was even more afraid, **9**and he went back into the courtyard again and said to Jesus, "Where do you come from?"

But Jesus didn't give him any answer.

10So Pilate said to Him, "You're not going to talk to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to set you free, and I also have the authority to put you on a cross?"

11Jesus answered, "You wouldn't have any authority at all over me if God in heaven hadn't given it to you. Therefore the man who handed me over to you is guilty of the greater sin."

12And because of this Pilate kept on trying to find some way to set Jesus free. But the Jews kept on shouting, "If you set this fellow free, you're no friend of the Emperor. Every man who claims to be a king is stirring up trouble for the Emperor."

13aSo when Pilate heard that, he brought Jesus outside and took Him to a place called "the Pavement," where there was a platform with a special chair* which the governor used when he was acting as the judge. In the language of the Jews the Pavement is called "Gabbatha".* **14a**It was now Friday* of the Passover week, about six o'clock in the morning. **13b**And when Pilate sat down in his chair, **14b**he said to the Jews, "Look! Here's your king!"

15 But those people shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Put him on a cross!"

"Shall I put your king on a cross?" said Pilate.

And the head priests answered, "We don't have a king but the Emperor."

16 So Pilate finally handed Him over to the soldiers to be put on a cross.

Jesus is Put to Death

Then they took Jesus away, **17** and He was carrying His own cross to a place outside the city called "the Dead Man's Head." In the language of the Jews, it is called "Golgotha". **18** That's where they nailed Him on the cross. And along with Him they crucified two other men, putting Jesus in the middle, and one of the other men on each side of Him. **19** Pilate also made a sign, and had them put it on the top of the cross. It said, "Jesus the Nazorite,* the King of the Jews." **20** It was written in Aramaic,* Latin and Greek and many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was put on the cross was close to the city.

21 The Jewish head priests however went to Pilate and said to him, "Don't write, 'the King of the Jews'. Instead, write, 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews''."

22 But Pilate answered, "What's written is written."

23 And when the soldiers had put Jesus on the cross they took His clothes and divided them up into four parts, one part for each soldier, plus His shirt. You see, His shirt was a single piece of cloth which had been woven together from the top to the bottom, with no seams. **24** And so they said to each other, "Let's not tear it to pieces. Let's shake the lot* for it, to see who'll get it." This happened so that what the Bible says would come true -

"They divided up my clothes among themselves,
and they shook the lot for my shirt".[†]

25And Jesus' mother, and His mother's sister Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary from Magdala were standing there close to Jesus' cross. **26**So when Jesus saw His mother, and the follower He loved* standing there beside her, He said to her, "Listen, mother! There is your son." **27**And then He said to that follower, "And you listen too! There is your mother." And from that moment, that follower took her into his home.

28Later on, when Jesus realized that everything had now been done, He said, "I'm thirsty",⁺ so that what the Bible says would come true.

29And there was a bowl sitting there, full of 'sour wine'.⁺ So one of the soldiers filled a sponge with the wine and put it on a spear, and lifted it up to Jesus' mouth.

30And when He had taken a drink of the wine, Jesus said, "It's all done!" And then He bowed His head and gave His spirit back to God.

31Later the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs* of the three men, and take them down from the crosses. They did this because it was Friday, and the bodies must not be hanging on the crosses on Saturday, because that was a special day that week.*

32So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man, and then the legs of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus. **33**But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they didn't break His legs. **34**But one of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus' side, and right away some blood and water ran out.* **35**And the man* who saw this says that this is exactly what happened, and that what he says is true. Yes, that man knows that he's telling the truth, so that you can believe it too.

36All this happened so that what the Bible says would come true - "Not one of His bones will be broken".⁺ **37**And there's another place in the Bible which says, "They will look at the Man they have stabbed".⁺

Jesus is Buried

38A little later Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take Jesus' body away. He was one of Jesus' secret followers, because he was afraid of the Jews.* And when Pilate gave his permission, Joseph went and took His body away. **39**Nicodemus also went with him. Nicodemus was the man who had gone to see Jesus at night some time before.* He brought along about seventy five pounds of myrrh* and aloes* mixed together. **40**And so they took Jesus' body and wrapped strips of cloth around it, putting the spices in between the layers of cloth. This is the way the Jews get a body ready to be buried.

42bThen they buried Jesus in a cave, **41**which was in a garden, close to the place where Jesus was put on the cross. It was a brand new grave in which no one had ever been buried. And they buried Him there **42a**because the cave was close by, and it was Friday, the day the Jews were getting ready for their day of rest.*

Jesus' Followers Don't Find His Body

20Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark out, Mary from Magdala went out to the grave, and saw that the stone was gone from the mouth of the cave.* **2**So then she ran back and found Simon Peter and the other follower Jesus loved,* and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the grave, and we don't know where they have put Him!"

3When they heard that, Peter and the other follower left the house and started out to the grave. **4**They were both running, and the other follower ran faster than Peter and got to the cave first. **5**He stooped down and peeked inside, and saw the strips of cloth lying there; but he didn't go in.*

6Then Simon Peter, who was running along behind him, arrived. But he went right into the cave, and saw the strips of cloth lying there. **7**He also saw that the big square piece of cloth which had been tied over Jesus' face wasn't lying with the cloth strips. It was

lying all by itself in another place, all folded up.

8Then the other follower,* who had come to the grave first, also went in; and when he saw all this, he believed what Mary had said. **9**You see, they still didn't understand that the Bible says that Jesus had to rise back to life again from the dead.

10Then the two men left the cave and went back to the others.

Jesus Appears to Mary from Magdala

11Mary however was still standing outside the cave, crying and sobbing. And while she was crying she stooped down and peeked inside the cave, **12**and saw two angels in white clothing sitting there where Jesus' body had been lying. One of them was sitting where Jesus' head had been, and the other where His feet had been.*

13Then one of the angels said to her, "Why are you crying, young lady?"

And she replied, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put Him."

14As soon as she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't recognize Him.

15Then He said to her, "Why are you crying, young lady? Who are you looking for?"

She thought He was the gardener. So she said to Him, "Sir, if you are the one who has carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I'll go and get Him myself."

16Then Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

And she turned to Him and said in Aramaic,* "Rab-bouni!" which means "My Teacher".

17But Jesus said to her, "You must stop holding on to me, because I haven't yet gone back up to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I'm going back to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'."

18So Mary from Magdala went to bring the news to Jesus' followers. "I have seen our Lord!" she said. And then she told them what He had said to her.

Jesus Appears to His Followers

19On that same Sunday Jesus' followers were in their room towards the end of the afternoon, but the doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. But Jesus came to the house, and suddenly He was standing there in the middle of the room! "You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about,"* He said. **20**And then He showed them His hands and His side. His followers of course were filled with joy when they saw their Lord.

21Then Jesus said to them again, "You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about. I'm going to send you in the same way my Father sent me." **22**And after He said this, He breathed on them and said, "You must receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you say they aren't forgiven, they aren't forgiven."

The Lord Appears to Thomas

24Thomas, who was called "the twin", was one of the twelve, but he wasn't with the others when Jesus came to the house that day.

25So the other followers said to him, "We have seen our Lord!"

And Thomas replied, "If I don't see the nail holes in His hands, and put my finger into the holes and my hand into His side, I'll never believe it."

26So a week later Jesus' followers were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. And even though the doors were locked, Jesus came into the room, and suddenly He was standing there in their midst, saying, "You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about."

27Then He said, "Thomas, put your finger right here, and look at my hands. And then reach out your hand

and put it into my side. And stop being an unbeliever and become a believer!"

28 Thomas answered, "My Lord, and my God."

29 Then Jesus said to him, "Now you believe because you have seen me. The truly happy people are those who have come to believe even though they have never seen me."

A Personal Note from the Writer

30 Jesus' followers saw Him do a lot of other miracles, which aren't written down in this book. **31** But I have written about these miracles, so that you will come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son, and that as a believer, you will have Life through Him and what He did.

Jesus Appears to Seven of His Followers

21 After this Jesus showed Himself to His followers again on the shore of Lake Tiberias;* and I'll tell you how it happened.

2 Simon Peter and Thomas, who was called "the twin", and Nathanael, who was from Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee and two others of Jesus' followers were all together. **3** And Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing."

And the others said, "We'll go along with you." So they all went out and got into the boat, but that night they didn't catch a thing.

4 But just as the sun was rising in the morning, Jesus was standing there on the beach. His followers of course didn't know that it was Jesus. **5** So Jesus called out to them, "Hey men! You don't have any fish, do you?"

And they answered, "No."

6 Then Jesus said, "Throw your net out on the right side of the boat, and you'll find some fish."

And when they did, they weren't able to haul it back in, because there were so many fish in the net.

7 Then the follower Jesus loved* said to Peter, "It's

our Lord!"

And when Peter realized that it was the Lord, he put his long outer cloak and his belt back on, and jumped into the lake. You see, he had taken off his cloak while he was working. ⁸But the other followers came to shore in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, because they weren't very far from land, only about a hundred yards out.

⁹And when they stepped out of the boat onto the shore, they saw a charcoal fire burning. And there were some fish on the fire, and some bread* there.

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

¹¹So Simon Peter waded out into the water and dragged the net up onto the shore. It was full of big fish, a hundred and fifty three of them. But even with all those fish the net wasn't torn.

¹²"Come on!" said Jesus. "Have some breakfast!"

None of His followers dared to ask Him who He was, because they knew it was their Lord.

¹³So Jesus went and took the bread and gave it to them, and then He did the same thing with the fish.

¹⁴This was the third time Jesus showed Himself to His followers after He had been raised back to life from the dead.

Jesus Speaks with Peter

¹⁵After they finished their breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these other men do?"*

"Yes Lord," Peter answered, "You certainly know that I'm Your friend."

"Then feed my lambs," said Jesus.

¹⁶Later Jesus asked Peter the same question again, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes Lord," Peter answered, "You certainly know that I'm Your friend."

"Then take care of my sheep," said Jesus.

17 And later Jesus said to Peter the third time, "Simon, Son of John, are you my friend?"*

There was a terrible pain in Peter's heart when Jesus asked him the third time, "Are you my friend?" And he replied, "Lord, You know everything. You certainly know that I'm Your friend."

"Then feed my sheep," said Jesus. **18** "I'm telling you the truth when I say that when you were a young man, you used to fasten your belt and walk wherever you wanted to go. But when you get old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you up and take you where you don't want to go." **19** Jesus said this to let Peter know how he would die* to bring glory and honor to God. And then He said to Peter, "You must follow me!"

Some Closing Notes about, and from, the Writer

20 Then Peter turned around and saw the follower Jesus loved* following them. This was the man who had been lying with his head close to Jesus' chest at the Passover dinner, and had asked Jesus, "Lord, who is the man who is going to hand You over to Your enemies?"* **21** So when Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"

22 Jesus said to him, "If I want him to stay here until I come back, what difference will that make to you? You must follow me."

23 Because of this, the story went around among the brothers and sisters that this follower* wasn't going to die. But Jesus didn't say, "He isn't going to die." He said, "If I want him to stay here until I come back, what difference will that make to you?"

24 And this man is the follower who is telling about all these things, and the one who wrote them down. And we know that what he says is true.

25 Of course Jesus also did a lot of other things. And if all those things were to be written down one by one, I don't think there would be room enough in

the whole world to hold all the books that would be written.

Appendix

A Story about a Sinful Woman*

7 ⁵³Then everyone went home, 8 ¹and Jesus went out to Mount Olive. ²But early the next morning, just as it was beginning to get light out, He was back in the Temple-yard again, and the whole crowd of people gathered around Him. So He sat down and began to explain the Bible to them.

³But while He was teaching them, the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who wasn't her husband, and they made her stand right in the middle of the crowd. ⁴"Rabbi," they said, "This woman was caught in bed, having sex with a man who isn't her husband. ⁵And in our Law Moses commanded us to kill women like this with stones. But what do you say?" ⁶Of course when they said this, they were trying to trick Jesus into saying something wrong, so that they could take Him to court and accuse Him of false teaching.

But Jesus stooped down and began to write something in the sand with His finger. ⁷But since they kept on asking Him questions, Jesus stood up and said to them, "Whichever one of you has never sinned must throw the first stone at her." ⁸And then He stooped down again and went on writing in the sand.

⁹And when they heard His reply, the men began to walk away, one by one, beginning with the Council members, until Jesus was left all alone with the woman, who was still standing there.

¹⁰Then Jesus stood up and said to her, "Where are they? Didn't anyone sentence you to death?"

¹¹"No sir," she said. "not a one."

And Jesus replied, "I'm not going to sentence you to death either. Go on home; but from now on, you must stop sinning."

THE ACTS OF JESUS WORKING THROUGH HIS FOLLOWERS

(Written by Luke in 60 or 61 A.D.)

Luke's Foreword

Dear Theophilus:

1 In my first book I wrote about all the things Jesus did and taught. I started at the very beginning **2**and went right up to the day when He was taken up into heaven, after He gave His orders through the Holy Spirit to those men whom He had chosen to be His apostles.

3 I also wrote about all the things Jesus did to prove to His apostles that He was really alive. For forty days after His suffering He appeared to them so that they could see Him, and talked with them about God's Kingdom. **4**And when they were all together, He gave them orders not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the gift which His Father had promised.* And He said to them, "You heard me talk about this. **5** I told you that 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit'.* And it won't be very long until this happens."

Jesus Goes back into Heaven

May, 29

6And so when they all gathered together on that last day, Jesus' followers asked Him, "Lord, is this the time You're going to set up the Kingdom of Israel again?"

7And Jesus answered. "My Father is the one who has the authority to decide how long things will last and when things are going to happen, and you aren't allowed to know all these things. **8**But after the Holy Spirit comes down on you, you will be filled with power. And then you must be witnesses who will tell other people about me here in Jerusalem, and all over Judea

*Helpful notes for Acts begin on page 791

and Samaria, and 'to the farthest corner of the earth'."⁺

⁹And after He said this, He started to rise up in the air, right before their very eyes; * and they kept on watching Him until He disappeared in a cloud. ¹⁰And while they were staring up into the sky, watching Him go, two men in white clothing were suddenly standing there beside them.* ¹¹Then one of them said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the sky? This man Jesus, who has been taken away from you up into heaven, is going to come back again in exactly the same way that you saw Him going into heaven."*

SECTION I - IN JERUSALEM

Jesus' Followers Elect Judas' Replacement May, 29

¹²Then Jesus' followers went back to Jerusalem from what was called "Mount Olive", which is very close to the city, being no farther away than the Law allows a person to walk on Saturday.* ¹³And when they got back to town, they went to the upstairs room* where the apostles were staying - Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Patriot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴These men all spent a lot of time praying together as a group, along with the women and Jesus' mother Mary, and His brothers, and sisters.*

¹⁵A little later there was a crowd of about 120 believers gathered together, and Peter stood up in the middle of the group and said, ^{16b}"My friends, brothers and sisters, there's a place in the Bible where the Holy Spirit used David's mouth to speak about Judas, ¹⁷who became a member of our group and was given a part in this work of ours, ^{16c}and then became the guide for the men who arrested Jesus. ^{16a}And what the Spirit said had to come true".*

(^{18b}Later on, when Judas tried to hang himself,

⁺Verses quoted in Acts are on page 877

he fell headfirst to the ground, and his belly burst open and all his insides spilled out. ^{18a}And therefore he became the owner of that field through the money he was paid for that wicked thing he did.* ¹⁹And when everyone living in Jerusalem heard about this, that field was called 'Akeldamach' in their language, which means 'the bloody field.')

²⁰Then Peter continued, "As you know, God says in the book of Psalms,

'His house must become empty;
there can't ever be anyone living in it',⁺ and
'another man must take over his position as
manager'.⁺

²¹Therefore we must take those men who have been with us during the whole time that our Lord Jesus was living with us, ²²beginning from the time He was baptized by John until the day He was taken up from us into heaven. And one of these men must be chosen to take Judas' place in our group as a witness that Jesus came back to life again."

²³So the group nominated two men, Joseph (or Barsabbas) Justus, and Matthias. ^{24a}And then they prayed, "Lord, You know what is in the hearts of all people. ^{25b}Since Judas has given up his position as an apostle, and the part he had in this work of ours, to go to the place where he belongs, ^{24b}show us which one of these two men You have chosen ^{25a}to take his place."

²⁶Then they put each man's mark on a little stone and put the two stones in a hat. And when they shook the hat, Matthias' stone popped out first; so he became the twelfth apostle.*

Jesus' Followers are Given the Holy Spirit June, 29

²When the day of Pentecost* came, all of Jesus' followers were together in one place. ²And suddenly there was a noise coming out of the sky that sounded like a tornado, and the whole house where they were sitting was filled with this noise. ³Then they saw what looked like little divided tongues of fire sitting

on each man's head. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, each one saying whatever the Spirit told him to say.

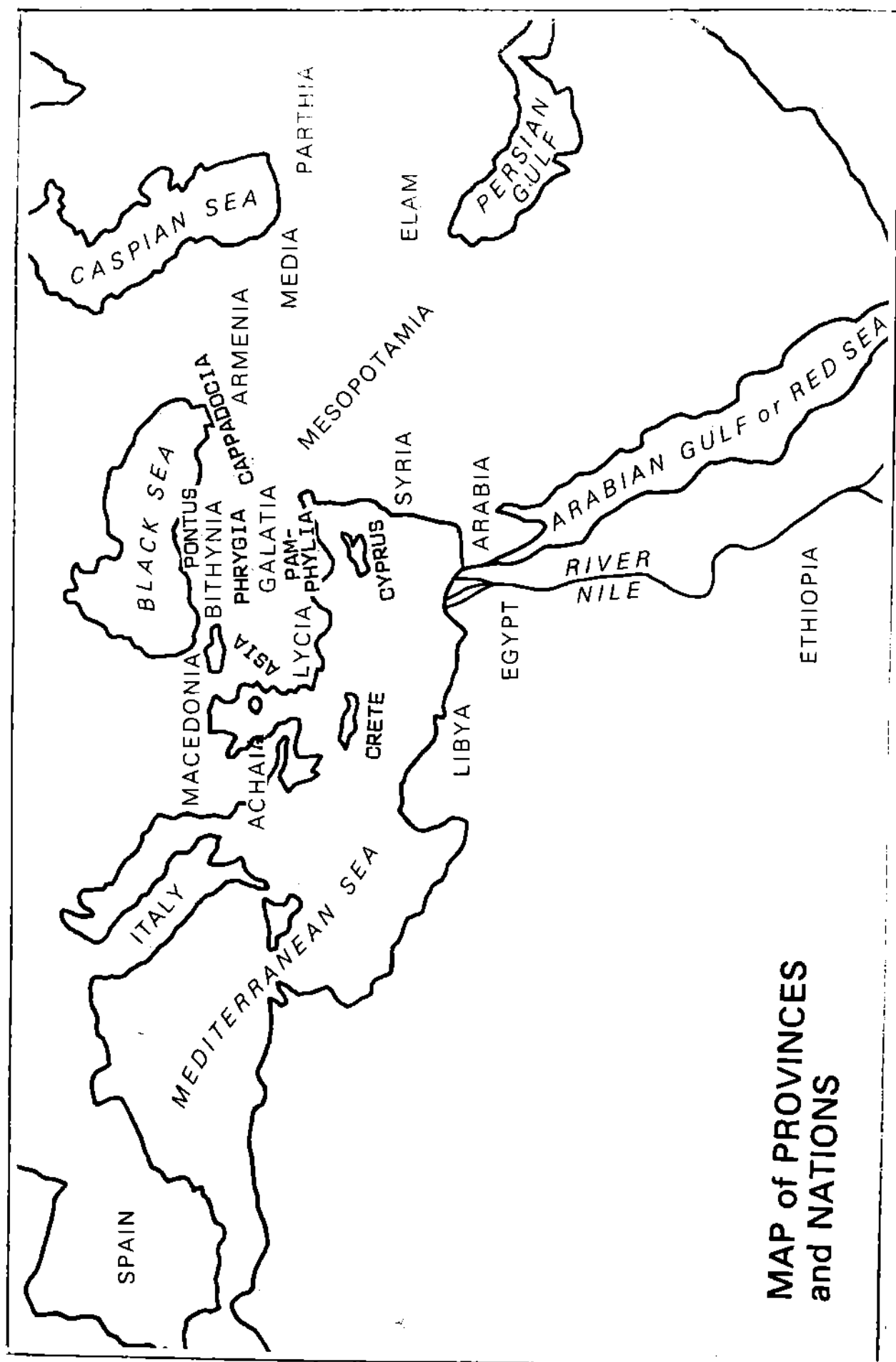
⁵At that time there were God-fearing Jews living in Jerusalem who had come from every country in the world. ⁶And when this noise began, a crowd of people gathered together, and they were all excited, because each one of them was hearing one of Jesus' followers talking in his own language. ⁷They were amazed and astonished, and they were saying, "Listen to them! These men who are talking are all Galileans, aren't they?" ⁸Then how can it be that each one of us is hearing one of them talking in our own native language? ⁹Some of us are Parthians, some are Medes, some are Elamites. Some are citizens of Judea, others are citizens of Mesopotamia, or Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, or the western part of Libya around Cyrene. There are people from Rome who are now living here. ¹¹But whether we're Jews or foreigners who have come over to the Jewish faith, or Cretans or Arabians,* we're hearing these men talking in our own languages about the great things God has done."

¹²They were all completely amazed, and couldn't figure out what had happened. They kept on asking each other, "What's it all about?"

¹³But there were some who were making fun of Jesus' followers, saying, "They're full of new wine."

Peter's Speech to the People that Day

¹⁴Since Peter was standing there with the other eleven apostles, he started to talk to the people, raising his voice so that everyone could hear him. "Dear friends in Judea, and all of you who are living here in Jerusalem, I must tell you what this is all about. So listen carefully to what I'm going to say. ¹⁵You see, this isn't what you're thinking at all. These men aren't drunk. After all, it's only nine o'clock in the morning.



**MAP of PROVINCES
and NATIONS**

16"Instead, this is what the Lord was talking about through the prophet Joel, where he says,

17 'Our God says, "This is what will happen in the last days.*

I will pour out My Spirit on every person,
and your sons and daughters will speak
as prophets.*

Your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.

18 Yes, in those days I will pour out My Spirit
on all My slaves, both men and women;
and they will speak as prophets.

19 I will do wonderful things in the sky above,
and I will work miracles on the earth below.
There will be blood and fire, and a smoky mist.

20 The sun will be turned into darkness,
and the moon will look like blood,
before that great and glorious Day of the
Lord comes.

21 And everyone who calls on the Lord for help
will be saved".[†]

22"And now, my friends and fellow Israelites, listen to what I'm going to tell you. Jesus the Nazorite* was a man who came from God. And God made this clear to you by the miracles and wonderful things and signs which He worked in your midst through this Man, as you all know. 23And then according to the plan which God worked out in eternity, using His unlimited knowledge, this Man was handed over to you, and you killed Him by getting sinful men to put Him on a cross. 24But God set Him free from the sufferings of death and raised Him back to life again, because it wasn't possible for death to hold Him in its power.

25"You see, David was thinking of Him when he said,

'I saw my Lord always right in front of me;
and because He is at my right hand,
nothing can trouble me.

26 Therefore my heart is happy,

and I sing happy songs.

Yes, even this body of mine* will live
in hope,

27 because You will not leave me in the grave,
or let Your holy one rot and decay.

28 You have shown me the roads that lead to life,
and You will fill me with happiness when I
see Your face'.⁺

29"My friends and brothers, I can talk to you very plainly and openly about our great forefather David. He died and was buried, and even today his grave is here in this city. 30But David knew that God 'had made him a promise' and had sealed it with an oath,* 'that the promised Savior* would come from his family and sit on his throne'.*⁺ And since David was a prophet, 31he looked into the future and spoke about this promised Savior coming back to life again when he said,

'He wasn't left in the grave,
and His body didn't rot and decay'.⁺

32Jesus was this promised Savior, whom God raised back to life again, and we all saw Him alive.

33"So after Jesus had been taken up into heaven to sit at God's right hand, His Father gave Him the promise of the Holy Spirit, and now He has been pouring out this Spirit. And this is what you are seeing and hearing now.

34"After all, David didn't go up to heaven. But David is the one who says,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit down here at My right hand

35 until I make Your enemies a footstool
for Your feet".⁺

36"So the whole nation of Israel must know for sure that God has made this Jesus, whom you put on a cross, our Lord and our promised Savior!"

37When the people heard this, it was just as though Peter had stuck a knife in their hearts. So they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Tell us, friends

and brothers, what must we do?"

38"You must change your minds and your way of living," said Peter. "And then each one of you must be baptized into Jesus the promised Savior, and your sins will be forgiven. And then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39**You see, this promise is meant for you and for your children, and for all your descendants - for all the people the Lord our God calls to come to Him." **40**And Peter kept on talking to them for quite a long time, warning them and pleading with them. He was saying, "You must let God save you from these dishonest Israelites of today."

41And so those who believed what Peter told them were baptized. And that day about three thousand more people were added to their group. **42**And these people spent their time listening to the apostles as they explained the Bible* to them. And they stayed together as a group, and ate together and prayed together.

The Early Church in Jerusalem

Fall, 29

43The Lord also kept on doing many wonderful things and miracles through the apostles, and this frightened everyone in Jerusalem.

44But all the believers kept on meeting together as one group, and they shared what they had with each other. **45**They would sell their property and other belongings, and divide up the money with all the others, so that everyone got what he needed.

46And every day they spent a lot of time together as a group in the Temple-yard.* They were perfectly united in mind and heart, eating their meals together, and sharing their food with each other with happy and sincere hearts. **47**They were always praising God, and all the people of Israel respected them. And every day the Lord kept on adding to their group those people who were being saved.

Peter and John Heal a Crippled Man**Fall, 29**

3 One day Peter and John were going up into the Temple-yard for the three o'clock prayer hour. **2**And at the Beautiful Gate* there was a man who had been crippled from the day he was born. Every day this man's friends would carry him in and put him down there at that gate,* so that he could ask those who were going to the Temple for some money. **3**So just as Peter and John were about to go through the gate, this man saw them and asked for some money.

4Peter and John both stared at the man, and then Peter said to him, "Look at us!"

5So the man looked up at them, thinking he was going to get something from them.

6But Peter said to him, "I don't have any silver or gold, but what I do have I'll give you. By the authority of Jesus Christ, the Nazorite,* I'm telling you to get up and walk!" **7**Then Peter grabbed hold of the man's right hand and started to pull him up. And immediately his feet and ankles became strong, **8**and he jumped up and stood there on his feet. Then he started to walk around, and went in towards the Temple with Peter and John. He was walking and jumping up and down, praising God.

9Everyone there saw him walking and praising God, **10**and they all recognized him as the man who always sat in front of the Beautiful Gate, begging for money. And they were so completely astonished at what had happened to him that they didn't know what to think.

Peter's Speech in the Temple-yard

11Later Peter and John walked over to the covered walkway that was called "Solomon's Walk",* with the beggar still hanging on to them. And now everyone in the Temple-yard ran over and joined them. They were all astonished.

12When Peter saw the crowd, he began to talk to the people. "My friends and fellow Israelites," he

said, "why are you so astonished at this? And why do you keep on staring at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness? ¹³"The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our forefathers,* has given glory and honor to His Servant Jesus, the same Jesus whom you handed over to be killed. And then you stood in front of Pilate and said that you didn't want anything to do with Him, after Pilate had decided to set Him free. ¹⁴Yes, you said that you didn't want anything to do with this Man who was absolutely holy and without sin, and you asked Pilate to give you a man who was a murderer. ¹⁵And then you killed the One who gives life to all human beings. But God raised Him back to Life from the dead. And we saw all this with our own eyes.

¹⁶"And now you are looking at what He has done for this man, whom you all know. He used this man's faith in Him to make his legs strong. And so it was this man's faith, which Jesus gave him, which has given him his perfect health which you can all see for yourselves.

¹⁷"And now my brothers, I know that when you did these things to Jesus, you didn't know what you were doing. And the same thing is true of your leaders. ¹⁸But a long time ago God used the mouths of all the prophets to tell us that His promised Savior was going to suffer. And now He has made it all come true in this way.

¹⁹"Now therefore you must change your minds and your way of living, so that your sins will be wiped out. ²⁰And then the Lord will send you times of rest and refreshment. And after that He will send Jesus back to you, the promised Savior whom He chose long ago. ²¹But now He must stay in heaven until the time when everything will be made new again. This is what God has said through the mouths of His holy prophets, going all the way back to the first one.

²²"For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up a Prophet for you from your own people, like me.

You must listen to everything He tells you'.⁺ **23**'And anyone who doesn't listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from My people'.⁺ **24**And from Samuel on, all the men who spoke as prophets also spoke about what would happen at this present time.

25"You people are the children of the prophets. You are the children of the agreement* which God made with your forefathers when He said to Abraham, 'All the families of the earth will receive a blessing through your Descendant'.⁺ **26**And so when God raised up His Servant,* He sent Him to you people first, to give you His blessing by making each one of you turn from your wicked ways."

Peter and John's Trial before the Council Fall, 29

4 Peter and John were still talking to the people when suddenly the priests and the Captain of the Temple police and some Sadducees* came up to them. **2**They were angry because Peter and John were explaining the Bible to the people and telling them that Jesus had proved that the dead are going to come back to life again.* **3**And since it was already late in the afternoon, they arrested Peter and John and threw them in jail until the next day. **4**But many of those who heard Peter's speech believed what he said, so that by this time there were about five thousand men who were believers.

5The next day the officers of the meeting houses, the members of the Council,* and the scribes* held a big meeting in Jerusalem **6**with Annas the Head Priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the other members of the Head Priest's family.* **7**They brought Peter and John into the meeting and began to question them. "Where did you get the power, and who gave you the authority to do this thing?" they asked.

8Then God filled Peter with the Holy Spirit, and he answered, "Leaders of the people and members of the Council, **9**since we're being questioned today about the good deed that was done for a crippled man, and what it was that made this man well, **10**you

and the whole nation of Israel must know that this man was healed by the authority of Jesus Christ, the Nazorite,* the man you put on a cross, and the man God raised back to life from the dead. He's the one who has made this man stand here in front of you healthy and well. ¹¹Yes, this Man is

'the stone which you builders thought was no good, which has now become the cornerstone'.⁺

¹²And we can't be saved by any other person, for there is no other person who has ever been or ever will be born anywhere in the whole world who has been sent by God to be our Savior."

¹³When they all saw how boldly and clearly Peter and John were speaking, they were astonished, especially since they knew that they were ordinary men who had never had any education. They also knew very well that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴But when they saw the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say to argue against what Peter had said. ¹⁵So they told Peter and John to leave the room; and then they started to talk things over among themselves.

¹⁶"What are we going to do to these men?" they asked. "After all, everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have worked a remarkable miracle, and we can't deny it. ¹⁷But in order to keep this from spreading any further among the people of Israel, we must tell them that they must never again speak to any person as this man's messengers, and threaten to punish them if they do." ¹⁸Then they called Peter and John back in and gave them strict orders that they must stop explaining the Bible, and that they mustn't say a single word to anyone as Jesus' messengers.

¹⁹But Peter and John replied, "You'll have to decide for yourselves if listening to you rather than God is the right thing to do in God's sight, ²⁰because we can't stop talking about the things that we have seen and heard."

²¹Then the members of the Council and the priests

made some more threats to punish them and let them go, since they couldn't find any way to punish them, because of the people. You see, everyone was praising God for what had happened, ²²because the man who had been so miraculously healed was over forty years old.

All the Believers Pray for Boldness

²³As soon as they were set free, the two apostles went back to their friends and told them everything the head priests and the members of the Council had said to them. ²⁴And when the others heard about all this, they all joined together in prayer to God. "Master," they said, "You are the 'one who made the heavens, the land, the oceans, and everything that is in them'.⁺ ²⁵You are the one who spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, Your servant, saying,

'Why do the people of the other nations* act like wild horses?

And why do they plan things that will never succeed?

²⁶ The Kings of the earth are lined up for battle, and the leaders are all gathered together against the Lord and against His promised Savior'.*⁺

²⁷For it's true that in this city Herod* and Pontius Pilate* have joined together with the people of the other nations and the people of Israel against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You have anointed.*



ANOINTING WITH OIL

²⁸They have joined together to do all the things which

You have long ago decided are going to happen by Your power and will. ²⁹And now, Lord, look at the threats they have made, and help Your slaves to speak Your Word in the plainest and clearest way possible, ³⁰while You stretch out Your hand to heal and work miracles and do wonderful things by the power and authority of Jesus, Your holy Servant."

³¹And when they finished their prayer, the place where they were gathered together trembled and shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God's Word clearly and boldly.

Another Picture of the Believers

Fall, 29

³²This whole crowd of believers had the same thoughts and the same desires. And not a single one of them said that any of his belongings were his own. Instead, they shared everything they had with the others.

³³And the apostles kept on telling the people about how they had seen and spoken with the Lord Jesus after He had come back to life again; and they spoke with great power. There was also something very pleasant and charming about them all, so that everybody liked them. ³⁴You see, there wasn't anyone in their group who was in need, because all those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money they received from the sale ³⁵and give it to the apostles. And then, when anyone of the group needed anything, the apostles gave him the money he needed.

³⁶One of the men who did this was Joseph. He was a Levite who had been born in Cyprus, and the apostles called him "Barnabas," which means "a man who likes to help." ³⁷Since he owned a farm, he sold it and brought the money and gave it to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

Winter, 30

⁵ There was another man by the name of Ananias. He and his wife Sapphira also sold something they owned. ²And with his wife's full knowledge Ananias kept a part of the money for themselves, and then brought the rest of it and gave it to the apostles.

³So Peter said to him, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart so that you would lie to the Holy Spirit and keep for yourselves a part of the money you got for your land? ⁴As long as you owned the land, it was yours, wasn't it? And after it was sold, you had the right to do whatever you wanted with the money. What ever made you think of doing such a thing? You haven't lied to other people, but to God."

⁵And while Ananias was listening to Peter's words, he fell down and died; and all those who heard about it were filled with a great fear. ⁶Then some of the younger men got up and wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷About three hours later Ananias' wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸So after she said "Hello," Peter said to her, "Tell me, was this the full amount of money you got for your land?"

"Yes," she answered, "that was the full amount."

⁹Then Peter said to her, "How could you two ever agree to put the Lord's Spirit to the test? Listen! Just outside the door you can hear the footsteps of the men who have buried your husband. And they're going to carry you out too!"

¹⁰And immediately she fell down at his feet and died. And when the young men came into the room, they found her dead. So they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹Then a feeling of great fear came over the whole church and all those who heard about these things.

The Lord Causes the Church to Grow

30

^{12b}All the believers continued to meet together as a group in Solomon's Walk.* ¹³And while no one else dared to join them, everyone kept talking about how wonderful they were. ¹⁴But large numbers of men and women who believed in the Lord were always being added to their group, ^{12a}as the Lord kept on using the apostles to work miracles and do many wonderful things among the people. ¹⁵And so the people

even brought their sick people out into the streets and laid them there on little rugs and padded mats, hoping that when Peter walked by, at least his shadow might fall on one of them. ¹⁶There was also a big crowd of people from the cities around Jerusalem who gathered together every day. They brought their sick people and those who were having trouble with evil spirits, and they were all made well.

The Apostles are Thrown in Jail

¹⁷But the Head Priest and all his friends and followers who made up the group called the "Sadducees"* were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸So they arrested the apostles and put them in the city jail.

¹⁹But during the night one of the Lord's angels opened the doors of the jail and led them outside. Then he said to them, ²⁰"Go and stand in the Temple-yard and keep on telling the people all about this Life".*

²¹And when they heard this, the apostles went to the Temple-yard just as the sun was coming up and began to explain the Bible to the people.

Later on, when the Head Priest and his friends and followers got there, they called a meeting of their own group, and then they called together the whole Council of the nation of Israel.* And when they were all there, they sent word to the jail to have the prisoners brought in. ²²But when the officers got to the jail, they couldn't find them there. So they went back and reported all this to the Council. ²³"We found the jail all locked up as tight as could be," they said, "and the guards standing there in front of the doors. But when we opened the doors, we didn't find anybody inside!"

²⁴When the Captain of the Temple police and the head priests heard this, they couldn't figure out how this could have happened.

²⁵But then a man came in and gave them the news - "Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple-yard explaining the Bible to the people!"

26So the Captain and some of his officers went off and brought the apostles back. But they didn't use any force, because they were afraid that if they did, the people would stone them to death.

27And after they had brought them into the Council meeting, and had put them into the place where they were to stand, the Head Priest started to question them. **28**"We gave you strict orders," he said, "that you had to stop explaining the Bible to the people as this man's messengers. And now look at what you've done! You have filled the whole city of Jerusalem with your teaching. And you want to put the blame for this man's death on us."

29Then Peter and the other apostles answered, "A person must obey God rather than men. **30**The God of our forefathers has raised Jesus back to life after you killed Him by putting Him on a cross. **31**And then God lifted this man up to sit beside Him at His right hand as our Ruler and Savior. And He did this to get the people of Israel to change their minds and their way of living, and to take away their sins. **32**And we have seen and heard all these things we're telling you about. And the Holy Spirit, whom God gives to those who obey Him, is also telling you the same things."

33When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this reply, they were so angry that they wanted to kill the apostles. **34**But one of the members by the name of Gamaliel got up to speak. He was a Pharisee* and a rabbi,* and everybody admired him and looked up to him. First, he told the officers to take the apostles outside for a little while. **35**And then he said, "My friends and fellow Israelites, think carefully about what you're going to do to these men. **36**You remember that some time ago Theudas appeared. He claimed to be a great man, and about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all his followers were scattered and the whole thing came to nothing. **37**Later on Judas the Galilean appeared at the time of the census, and got some of the people to follow him. But he got killed too, and all his followers were

scattered in all directions.

38"And so as we look at our present problem, I'm telling you to stay away from these men and leave them alone. Because if what they're planning and doing is just the work of some human beings, it will all fall apart. **39**But if it's something God is doing, you won't be able to destroy them. And the danger is that you may find yourselves fighting against God!"

40And the Council decided that Gamaliel was right. So they called the apostles back in and had them beaten. And then they ordered them to stop speaking as Jesus' messengers, and let them go.

41Therefore the apostles left the Sanhedrin with happy hearts, because God had decided that they were good enough to be treated in such a shameful way for Jesus' sake. **42**And every day, whether they were in the Temple-yard or in the people's homes, the apostles never stopped explaining the Bible* to the people and spreading the Good News that Jesus is the promised Savior.

Seven Men are Elected to Help the Apostles 31

6 A little later, when more and more people were becoming followers of Jesus, the Jews who spoke Greek* began to complain about the Jews who spoke Aramaic,* because their widows were being skipped over when the food and money were being passed out each day. **2**So the twelve called the whole group of Jesus' followers together and said to them, "It isn't right for us to take the time that we should be giving to God's Word and spend it passing out food and money. **3**And so, my brothers, you must look around among yourselves for seven men whom everyone knows are filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we'll put them in charge of this part of our work. **4**And then we will spend all of our time praying and working with the Word."

5Everyone in the group thought this was a fine idea, and so they elected Stephen, whose heart was filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus,

Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolaus, who was a foreigner from Antioch who had come over to the Jewish faith. ⁶Then they brought these men to the apostles, who prayed and put their hands on them.

⁷And after this God's Word reached out to more and more people, and the number of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem kept on growing larger and larger, including a large number of the priests who came to believe in Jesus and accepted Him as their Lord.

The Story of Stephen's Arrest and Death 32

⁸Since Stephen was filled with God's undeserved love and power, he was doing wonderful things and great miracles among the people. ⁹But one day some men appeared from what was called "The Meeting House* of the Freedmen of Cyrene* and Alexandria," together with some men from the provinces of Cilicia and Asia, and they began to argue with Stephen. ¹⁰But the Spirit gave Stephen such wisdom and power that they couldn't stand up against him. ¹¹So they bribed some men to say, "We have heard this man say insulting things about Moses and God." ¹²And so they got the people and the members of the Council and the scribes* all stirred up. And one day they all suddenly showed up and grabbed Stephen and led him off to the Sanhedrin.* ¹³Then they brought in some witnesses who had been paid to tell lies about Stephen, and these men said, "This man never stops saying things against our Holy Temple and our Law. ¹⁴For example, we heard him say that this Jesus the Nazorite* is going to destroy this Temple* and change our Jewish way of doing things that Moses gave us."

¹⁵But when all the men sitting there in the Sanhedrin looked at Stephen, his face looked just like the face of an angel.

⁷ Then the Head Priest asked Stephen "Are all these things true?"

²And Stephen answered, "My friends, brothers and fathers, listen to me! Our glorious God appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia.

before he lived in Haran. ³And He told him, 'Leave your country and your family, and go to the land that I will show you'.⁺ ⁴So Abraham left the country of the Chaldeans and made his home in Haran. Then after his father died, God made him move from there and come to this land where you people are now living. ⁵But God didn't give him any part of the land to call his own, not even one square foot of it. However God promised that 'He would give him the land, to belong to him and his family after him',⁺ even though Abraham had no children at that time.

⁶"God also told him, 'Your family will live as visitors in a foreign land, and the people there will make them slaves and do all kinds of bad things to them for four hundred years. ⁷But I myself will punish that nation,' said the Lord. 'And after the 400 years your family will leave that country and will worship and serve Me in this land'.⁺ ⁸Then God told Abraham to circumcise* his children as the sign of the agreement.* So when Abraham became the father of Isaac, he circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac circumcised his son Jacob, and Jacob circumcised his twelve sons, who were the fathers* of our nation.

⁹"Those fathers were jealous of Joseph and sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰and rescued him from all his troubles. And 'He gave Joseph such a pleasant personality' and such wisdom that when he stood before the Pharoah (king) of Egypt, 'the Pharoah made him Governor of Egypt, and also put him in charge of his whole household'.⁺

¹¹" 'Then there was a famine all over Egypt and Canaan',⁺ which caused a lot of suffering, and our forefathers couldn't find any food. ¹²But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers off to get some. That was their first trip. ¹³And on their second trip Joseph told his brothers who he was, and the Pharoah found out about Joseph's family. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent his brothers back and invited his father Jacob and his whole family - 75

people in all - to move to Egypt. ¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt and died there. And our forefathers also died there. ¹⁶And their bodies were taken back to Shechem and buried in the cave which Abraham had bought for a certain amount of money from the family of Hamor, who lived in Shechem.

¹⁷"And when it was getting close to the time for God to keep the promise He had made to Abraham,* our people had grown and become a very large group there in Egypt. ¹⁸And at that same time there was a king of Egypt who came from a different family, and he didn't know anything about Joseph. ¹⁹This man did many bad things to our nation and was very cruel to them. He made our forefathers throw their newborn babies outside and leave them there to die.

²⁰"It was at this time that Moses was born, and he was one of God's favorite children. For three months his mother fed him and took care of him in their home. ²¹And then when they left him outside, the Pharaoh's daughter picked him up and brought him up as her son. ²²So Moses was given the very finest Egyptian education; and he became a very powerful speaker and learned how to do many things well.

²³"And when Moses was forty years old, he got the idea that he should go and visit his own people, the children of Israel. ²⁴And when he saw one of them being beaten up, he did what he could to help the man, and killed the Egyptian who was beating him up. ²⁵He thought his own people would understand that God was going to use him to set them free, but they didn't understand. ²⁶The next day he saw two Israelites fighting, and he tried to get them to make up and be friends again. 'My friends,' he said, 'you're brothers. Why are you trying to hurt each other?'

²⁷"But the man who was beating up the other one pushed Moses away. 'Who appointed you to be a ruler or a judge over us?' he said. ²⁸'You don't want to kill me like you killed that Egyptian yesterday, do you?'⁺

29"When the man said that, Moses got out of there as fast as he could. He went to the land of Midian and lived there as a visitor from another country. And while he was there, he got married and had two sons.

30"But forty years later, 'while Moses was out in the desert around Mt. Sinai, he saw a thorn bush that was all on fire, and an angel in the middle of the flames'.⁺ **31**When he first saw it, Moses couldn't believe what he was seeing. And then as he was coming up to it to get a better look at it, he heard the Lord's voice, **32**'I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob'.⁺

"Moses was so frightened that he was trembling, and he didn't dare to look any more. **33**'But the Lord said to him, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you're standing is holy ground. **34** I have seen how My people are suffering there in Egypt. I have heard them groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. And now you must get going, because I'm going to send you to Egypt".'⁺

35"And so it was this man Moses whom God sent out to be their ruler and savior, using the angel who appeared to him there in the thorn bush. Yes, it was the very same man whom they had said they didn't want anything to do with, when they said, 'Who made you our ruler and judge?'.^{*} **36**And this was the man who led them out of Egypt, after he had done wonderful things and miracles in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea. And he did the same kind of wonderful things in the desert for forty years. **37**And it was this man Moses who told the children of Israel, 'Our God will raise up a Prophet for you from your own people, just like me'.⁺ **38**He was a part of that group of people in the desert. And he was at Mt. Sinai with our forefathers, and with the angel who was speaking with them there. And he's the one who received God's living words to give to us.^{*}

39"But our forefathers wouldn't listen to him or

do what he said. They told him they didn't want anything to do with him, and they wanted to go back to Egypt. **40**They said to Aaron, 'Make some gods for us who will be our leaders, because we don't know what has happened to this fellow Moses who brought us out of Egypt'.⁺ **41**That was the time they made the calf. Then they brought a sacrifice to their idol and had a big feast to show how happy they were with what they had made with their own hands.

42"So God turned His back on them and let them go ahead and worship all the stars in the sky, just as it says in the Book of the Prophets -

'People of Israel,
During those forty years in the desert
you didn't bring butchered animals and
sacrifices to Me, did you?

43 No, you carried around Moloch's tent,
and the image of your star-god Rephan.
These were the idols which you made to worship.
So I will move you out of your land,
and take you to a land beyond Babylon'.⁺

44"In the desert our forefathers had the Tent where God meets with His people, and it was made just like God told Moses to make it, following the pattern he had seen. **45**And our forefathers who were with Joshua got this tent from their fathers and brought it in with them when they took over this land from the nations which God drove out before them. And they used it until the time of David.

46"David was a man whom God loved, and he asked if he could find a real house where Jacob's God could live. **47**But it was Solomon who built the house for Him.* **48**But the one true God doesn't live in houses built by men. It's just as the prophet says,

49 'Heaven is My throne,
and the earth is My footstool.
What kind of a house can you build for Me?'
says the Lord,
'or where is the place where I can rest?

50 Am I not the one who has made everything?'+

51"What stubborn people you are. You're not God's people. There's no love for Him or faith in Him in your hearts, and you don't use your ears to listen to Him. You people are always fighting against the Holy Spirit. You're doing exactly the same things your forefathers did. **52**Was there a single one of the prophets whom your forefathers didn't hate and try to kill? No, they killed the prophets who long ago were talking about the coming of the Man who would be without sin. And now you have betrayed and murdered that Man they were talking about.

53"You are the people to whom God gave His Law. He used His messengers to give it to you, but you haven't kept it."

Stephen is Killed

54As the members of the Council listened to Stephen, his words cut deep into their hearts, and they began to grind their teeth together because they were so angry with him.

55But Stephen was so filled with the Holy Spirit that he stared up into the sky and saw God's shining heavenly beauty, and Jesus standing at God's right hand. **56**And he said, "Look! I see the heavens all opened up, and the Son of Man* standing at God's right hand."

57But then all the members of the Council began to yell at the top of their voices and covered up their ears. And they all rushed at him **58**and dragged him outside the city, and threw stones at him. First the witnesses took off their long outer cloaks and put them down at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul. **59**And then they began to throw stones at Stephen, who kept on calling out and saying, "Lord Jesus, take my spirit!" **60**Then he got down on his knees and yelled at the top of his voice, "Master, don't hold this sin against them." And after he said this, he fell asleep.*

8 ^{1a}And Saul agreed with the others that they were doing the right thing by killing Stephen. ²Then some God-fearing men took Stephen's body away and buried it, and there was a lot of wailing and crying over what had happened to him, with people pounding on their chests in grief.

SECTION II - IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

The Jewish Leaders Try to Destroy the Church 32-33

1bThat same day Jesus' enemies in Jerusalem began to attack all the members of the church, and soon all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the districts of Judea and Samaria.* ³And Saul kept on trying to destroy the church. He went from one house to the next and dragged out both men and women and threw them in jail.

The Good News Comes to Samaria 33-34

⁴So the believers who were scattered went everywhere, spreading their message of Good News. ⁵Philip* went down to the city of Samaria, spreading the news about the promised Savior.* ⁶And as the crowds listened to him and saw the miracles he was doing, they all paid close attention to what Philip was saying. ⁷You see, many of those who had evil spirits were made well when the spirits came out of them, yelling at the top of their voices. And many who were paralyzed and crippled were made well. ⁸So there were many happy people in that city.

⁹And there was a man in that city by the name of Simon, who had been doing magic tricks, and amazing the people of Samaria. He claimed to be a great man, and all the people of Samaria, ¹⁰great and small, paid attention to him. They said, "This man is what is called 'God's Great Power'," ¹¹and they paid attention to him because he had been amazing them with his magic tricks for quite a long time.

¹²But as Philip kept on telling the people the Good News about God's Kingdom and Jesus the promised

Savior, they believed what he told them and were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Even Simon believed what Philip said, and after he was baptized, he spent all his time with Philip. And as he watched the great miracles and wonderful things that were being done, he was completely amazed.

¹⁴And when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's Word, they sent Peter and John to visit them. ¹⁵And when they arrived, they prayed for the people there, asking God to give them the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶You see, He hadn't yet come down on any of them, since they had only been baptized into the Lord Jesus.* ¹⁷Then Peter and John put their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles put their hands on them, he brought them some money ¹⁹and said to them, "Give me this authority too, so that if I put my hands on someone, he will receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰But Peter said to him, "I hope you and your money both rot in hell, because you thought you could buy God's free gift with money. ²¹You can't have any part or share in what we're talking about now, because your heart isn't right in God's sight. ²²You must change your mind and your way of living therefore, and turn away from this evil thought. And you must ask the Lord if He can forgive you for thinking such a thing. ²³After all, I can see that your heart is full of bitter feelings, and that you're still a slave of sin."

²⁴And Simon answered, "Please, you two pray to the Lord for me, so that none of the things you have said will happen to me."

²⁵And after Peter and John told the people what they knew about Jesus, and what the Lord told them to say, they went back to Jerusalem. And on their way they kept on spreading the Good News in many of the Samaritan villages.

Philip Tells a Man from Ethiopia about Jesus 34

26After this one of the Lord's angels spoke to Philip, "Pack up and start going south on the desert road that runs from Jerusalem down to Gaza."* **27**So Philip packed his things and started out. And then an interesting thing happened.

There was a man from Ethiopia travelling on that road. He was a high officer who was in charge of all the money and jewels and treasures of the Candaki (queen) of Ethiopia. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship God, **28**and now he was going back home. And he was sitting in his chariot, reading the book of the prophet Isaiah.

29So the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over there and stay close to that chariot." **30**So when Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah, he asked him, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

31"Well, how could I," said the man, "unless someone explains it to me?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and ride along with him.

32The part of the Bible he was reading was this -

"He's like a sheep which is being brought in
to be killed,

making no sound at all.

Or like a lamb which is having its wool cut off,

He doesn't open His mouth.

33 He was such a nobody
that He wasn't given a fair trial.

Who will ever talk about His children?

for His life here on earth is ended".⁺

34Then the man asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is this prophet talking about here, himself or someone else?"

35So Philip began to explain. He started with that chapter in Isaiah and told him the Good News about Jesus.

36Later on, as they were going down the road, they

came to some water, and the treasurer said, "Look! Here's some water! What's keeping me from being baptized?" ³⁸Then he ordered the driver to stop the chariot, and both Philip and the treasurer stepped down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

³⁹But when they stepped up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit suddenly picked Philip up and carried him away, and the man from Ethiopia never saw him again. But he was a happy man as he went on his way.

⁴⁰And Philip suddenly found himself in Azotus. And he kept on spreading the Good News in all the cities until he got to Caesarea.*

The Lord Calls Saul to be His Follower

35

⁹During this time Saul was still telling the Lord's followers about all the terrible things he was going to do to them, and trying to kill them. And one day he went to the Head Priest ²and asked him for some letters to the meeting houses* in Damascus* telling them who Saul was, so that if he could find any people there who were on "the Road",* both men and women, he could bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners.

³And as he was travelling to Damascus, he was getting close to the city, when all of a sudden a light flashed out of the sky all around him. ⁴And after he fell down on the ground, he heard a voice talking to him. "Saul," it said, "Saul, why are you chasing me around like an animal and trying to kill me?"

⁵Saul replied, "Who are you, sir?"

And the voice answered, "I'm Jesus, the one you're chasing and trying to kill. ⁶But now get up on your feet and go into the city, and someone will tell you what you must do."

⁷The men who were travelling with Saul were standing there, not saying a word. They heard the voice, but they didn't see anyone.

⁸But when Saul got up off the ground and opened his eyes, he couldn't see anything. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And

for the next three days he couldn't see anything, and he didn't eat or drink anything.

10Then the Lord appeared, just as clearly as could be, to one of His followers in Damascus whose name was Ananias, and said to him, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," said Ananias, "I'm right here!"

11And the Lord said to him, "Get dressed and go to Straight Street, and look for a man named Saul, from Tarsus, in the house of Judas. You see, I want you to know that this man is praying. **12**And in a dream he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him so that he can see again."

13But Ananias replied, "Lord, I have heard about this man from many people, and about all the terrible things he has done to Your people* in Jerusalem. **14**And now he's here in Damascus with authority from the head priests to arrest all those who call You their Lord."

15Then the Lord said to him, "Get going! Because I have chosen this man to be my special messenger. He will go to the people of the other nations* and to their kings, and also to the people of Israel, to tell them who I am. **16**And I'm going to show him how many things he will have to suffer because of me."

17So Ananias left home and went to the house of Judas and put his hands on Saul. And then he said, "Brother Saul, as you were coming here, the Lord Jesus appeared to you on the road. And now He has sent me, so that you can see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

18And suddenly something like fish scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. Then he got up and was baptized. **19**And after he had eaten some food, his strength came back.

Saul Tells the People of Damascus about Jesus

For the next few weeks Saul stayed there with the Lord's followers in Damascus. **20**And right away he began to spread the news about Jesus in the meeting

houses, telling the people, "This Man really is God's Son."

21 And all the people who heard him were amazed. They were saying, "Isn't this the man who attacked and killed the people in Jerusalem who call this man their Lord? And isn't he here in Damascus to do the same thing, to arrest the believers and bring them back to the head priests as prisoners?"

22 But Saul kept on getting stronger and stronger as he proved that Jesus really is the promised Savior,* and the Jews in Damascus didn't know what to think.

23 After quite a long time the Jews had a meeting and decided to kill Saul. **24** But he found out about their plot. And while they were keeping a close watch on the city gates day and night in order to kill Saul, **25** one night Saul's followers put him in a basket and lowered him through a window down the outside of the wall.

Saul Goes to Jerusalem, then to Tarsus 35-38

26 When Saul got back to Jerusalem,* he tried to join the Lord's followers, but they were all afraid of him, because they didn't believe that he was a real follower. **27** But then Barnabas* took Saul and brought him to the apostles. And he told them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and what the Lord had said to him, and how boldly and clearly he had spoken as Jesus' messenger in Damascus. **28** And after this Saul went with them wherever they went in Jerusalem, speaking boldly and clearly as the Lord's messenger.

29 He also began to talk and argue with the Jews who spoke Greek,* but they tried to kill him. **30** So when the brothers found out about this, they took Saul down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31 And after this the church lived in peace all over Judea, Galilee and Samaria. It kept on getting stronger and growing larger and larger by the constant help of the Holy Spirit, and its members lived as people who had a true fear and respect for the Lord.

Peter Heals a Man in Lydda**39-40**

32At this time Peter was travelling all over, and one day he went down to Lydda* to visit with God's people* who were living there. **33**And while he was there, he met a man by the name of Aeneas, who was paralyzed. For eight years he had been lying on a little padded mat.* **34**So Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ is going to make you well. Get up, and roll up your mat!"

And right away Aeneas got up. **35**And many of the people who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they all turned to the Lord.

Peter Raises Tabitha back to Life**40**

36And in Joppa* there was one of the Lord's followers by the name of Tabitha. In Greek her name is Dorcas, which means a "deer". She was always doing lots of nice things and giving things to the poor. **37**But just at that time she got sick and died. So they washed her body and put it in an upstairs room.

38But Lydda is close to Joppa. And since the Lord's followers had heard that Peter was there in Lydda, they sent two men to ask Him, "Please come to see us as soon as you can!"

39Peter therefore got up right away and went with them. And when he got there, they took him upstairs to the room. And right away all the widows were standing there around him, crying and showing him the shirts and long outer cloaks Dorcas had made while she was alive.

40But Peter sent them all outside. And after he got down on his knees and prayed, he turned to the body and said, "Tabitha! Get up!" And she opened her eyes.

And when she saw Peter, she sat up. **41**So Peter held out his hand to her and helped her get up. Then he called God's people and the widows and brought her out to them alive.

42 Soon everyone in Joppa knew what had happened, and a lot of people came to believe in the Lord. **43** So Peter stayed in Joppa for quite a long time, staying with a man named Simon, who was a leather worker.

Peter Meets Cornelius in Caesarea

40

10 In Caesarea* there was a man named Cornelius who was a captain* in what was called the "Italian Regiment" of the Roman army. **2** He was a God-fearing man,* and he and all the people who lived in his house worshiped the God of the Jews. He also gave a lot of gifts to the poor people, and prayed to God all the time.

3 One day about three o'clock in the afternoon Cornelius actually saw, just as clearly as could be, one of God's angels coming into the room. And it said to him, "Cornelius!"

4 As he stared at the angel, he became frightened, but then he answered, "Yes sir! What do you want?"

And the angel replied, "God remembers all your prayers and your gifts to the poor. **5** And now you must send some men to Joppa to a man named Simon, who is called Peter, and tell him that you want to see him. **6** He's staying with a man named Simon, who is a leather worker. His house is right by the ocean.

7 So when the angel who was talking with him had left, Cornelius called two of his household slaves and a soldier who was one of his personal bodyguards. The soldier was also a man who worshiped God. **8** First he told them everything that had happened, and then he sent them off to Joppa.

9 The next day these men were still on their way to Joppa. And about noon, as they were getting close to the city, Peter went up on the roof of Simon's house. **10** He had gotten hungry and wanted to eat, and while they were getting the dinner ready, he went up on the roof to pray. And while he was praying, something strange happened to him. It was just as though he had been taken into a different world, where he was

seeing and hearing only spiritual things,* **11**and there before him were the heavens all opened up, and something coming down which looked like a big sheet that was being let down to the earth by its four corners. **12**Inside of it were all the kinds of animals and reptiles that live on land, and all the kinds of wild birds.

13And then Peter heard a voice talking to him, "Get up, Peter! Kill something and eat it!"

14"No sir, Lord," said Peter. "There's no way I would ever do that, because I have never eaten anything that is 'unholy' or 'unclean'."*

15But the voice answered him, "You must never call anything 'unholy' that God has made 'clean'." **16**This happened three times, and then the thing was suddenly taken back up into heaven.

17While Peter was wondering what this thing he had seen was all about, the men Cornelius sent had asked around and found Simon's house, and were standing right outside the gate. **18**Then they called the gatekeeper and asked if Simon Peter was staying there.

19And while Peter was still thinking about what he had seen, the Spirit said to him, "Listen to me! Three men are here looking for you. **20**So get up and go down there, and go with them. And don't worry about whether it's the right thing to do or not, because I have sent them."

21So Peter went down and said to the men, "Here I am! I'm the one you're looking for. Why are you here?"

22And one of the men said, "Cornelius, a Roman army captain, sent us. He's a man who always does what is right, and a God-fearing man,* and all the Jewish people have nothing but good things to say about him. A holy angel told him to send a message and ask you to come to his house, so that he could hear what you have to say." **23**So Peter invited them in and gave them some food and a place to sleep.

The next day Peter got ready and went with them,

and some of the brothers from Joppa went along with him. ²⁴And the following day he arrived in Caesarea, and Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already called together his relatives and his closest friends. ²⁵And just as Peter was about to go into the house, Cornelius ran out to meet him and fell down at his feet, with his forehead on the ground.* ²⁶Peter however pulled him up on his feet. "Get up!" he said, "I'm just an ordinary man." ²⁷And Peter kept on talking with him as they went into the house.

When they got inside, Peter found a lot of people there. ²⁸And he said to them, "You people know that it's against the Law for a Jew to be a friend of a foreigner or go into his house.* But God has shown me that I mustn't say that any person is 'unholy' or 'unclean'. ²⁹And therefore when you sent for me, I came without asking any questions. But now I'd like to know why you sent for me."

³⁰Cornelius answered, "It was three days ago, right at this time, that I was praying the three o'clock prayer here in my house, when all of a sudden there was a man standing right there in front of me in the most beautiful clothes. ³¹And he said to me, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer, and He has remembered all your gifts to the poor. ³²Therefore you must send someone to Joppa and ask Simon, who is called Peter, to come to your house. This man is staying in the house of Simon the leather worker, right by the ocean.'

³³"Right away therefore I sent my men to see you, and you have done a very fine thing by coming. Now therefore we're all here in the presence of God to hear everything the Lord has told you to say."

Peter's Speech to Cornelius and His Friends

³⁴So Peter began to talk. "Now I really understand that God doesn't have any favorites, ³⁵and that He receives any person from any nation as one of His chosen people if that person fears Him* and does what is right in His sight.

36"You people must come to know the message God sent to the people of Israel when He brought them the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ. And you must learn that this Jesus is the Lord of all men.

37You must also learn how this Good News started out in Galilee after the baptism John spoke about, and how it spread all over Judea. **38**It's the story about Jesus of Nazareth, and how God anointed Him as the promised Savior* with the Holy Spirit and His own power. And you must learn how Jesus went all over doing things to help people and healing everyone who was under the power of the devil, because God was with Him. **39**And we saw and heard everything He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

"And you must come to know that the Jews hung Him on a cross and killed Him. **40**But God raised this Man back to life on the third day and let people see Him - **41**not all the people, of course, but us, the men whom God had already picked out ahead of time to be the eyewitnesses. Yes, we are the ones who saw Him, and ate with Him, and drank with Him after He came back to life again from the dead.

42"And He ordered us to spread this news to the people of Israel, and warn them that this is the One whom God has appointed to be the Judge of the living and the dead. **43**This is the Man that all the prophets speak about when they say that everyone who believes in Him has his sins taken away by what that Man did."

God Pours Out His Spirit on the People There

44While Peter was still talking, the Holy Spirit came down upon everyone who was listening to what he was saying. **45**And the Jewish believers who had come with Peter were amazed when they saw that God was also freely pouring out His gift of the Holy Spirit on people who weren't Jews,* **46**because they heard these people speaking in other languages and telling how wonderful God was.

Then Peter answered their thoughts. **47**"Certainly

no one can stop these people from being baptized with water, can he? After all, they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized into Jesus Christ.* And then they asked Peter to stay there with them for a while.

The Jews Criticize Peter's Actions

40

¹¹ Soon the apostles and brothers all over Judea heard that these people who weren't Jews also had accepted God's Word. ²And so when Peter went up to Jerusalem again, the Jewish brothers who said that all followers had to be circumcised* began to argue with Peter. ³"You went into a house where there were people who weren't circumcised," they said, "and you also ate with them!"*

⁴So Peter started at the very beginning and told them the whole story, step by step. ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa," he said, "and while I was praying, I saw something very strange. It was like I had fallen asleep and was dreaming. I saw something coming down out of the sky. It looked like a big sheet that was being let down by its four corners, and it came right down in front of me.

⁶"I looked inside of it and began to study it very carefully, and I saw animals that live on land, including wild animals, and reptiles, and wild birds. ⁷And then I heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter! Kill something and eat it!'

⁸"And I said, 'No sir, Lord! There's no way I would do that, because nothing "unholy" or "unclean" has ever gone into my mouth.'

⁹"Then the voice spoke again, coming right out of heaven. 'You must never call anything "unholy" that God has made "clean".'

¹⁰"This happened three times, and then the whole thing was pulled up into heaven again.

¹¹"But then a strange thing happened. At that very moment three men arrived at the house where I was staying. They had been sent from Caesarea to get

me ¹²And the Spirit told me to go along with them, without asking any questions or worrying about whether it was the right thing to do or not. So I went, and these six brothers also went along with me, and we all went into the man's house.

¹³"Then the man told us how he had seen an angel standing right there in his house, and how the angel had said to him, 'Send someone to Joppa to a man named Simon, who is called Peter, and tell him that you want to see him. ¹⁴He will tell you things that will save you and everyone in your house.'

¹⁵"And as soon as I started to talk to them, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as He did on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And then I remembered what the Lord had said - 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit'.* ¹⁷Since God therefore had freely given them the same gift He gave us when we came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I was able to stop God from doing these things?"

¹⁸And when the others heard all this, they quieted down and praised God. "It's true, then," they said, "that God also leads people who aren't Jews to change their minds and their way of living, so that they can have Life."

SECTION III - TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

The Good News Comes to Antioch

41

¹⁹When the trouble over Stephen broke out in Jerusalem, the believers were scattered all over,* and some of them went as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch.* But they didn't spread the Word to anyone except the Jews. ²⁰But then some of the believers came from Cyprus* and Cyrene,* and when they went to Antioch, they began to talk to the Greeks also, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. ²¹And the Lord worked with them with all His power, and a large number of people believed the Good News and turned to the Lord.

22So when the church in Jerusalem heard about these people, they sent Barnabas* off to Antioch.

23And when he got there and saw what God's undeserved love had done, he was very happy. And he encouraged them all to stay faithful and true to the Lord with all their hearts. **24**And because Barnabas was a good man who was filled with the Holy Spirit and faith, a good-sized group of people were brought to the Lord.

25Then Barnabas left town and went to Tarsus to look for Saul. **26**And when he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. And the two of them met with the church there in Antioch for a whole year, and explained the Bible* to a good-sized group of people. And it was there in Antioch that the Lord's followers were first called "Christians".

27During this time some prophets* came down to Antioch from Jerusalem. **28**And one day one of them whose name was Agabus got up and said that the Spirit had told him that there was going to be a terrible famine which would cover the whole Roman world. (This happened while Claudius was the Emperor).*

29So each of the Lord's followers decided to send as much as he could to help the brothers who were living in Judea. **30**And when each one brought his gift, they sent Barnabas and Saul to bring their gifts to the officers of the churches in Judea.

Herod Agrippa Tries to Destroy the Church 43

12 About that time King Herod* arrested some of the members of the church, so that he could beat them and torture them. **2**And he killed John's brother James by cutting off his head with a sword. **3**And when he saw that the Jews really liked this, he went ahead and arrested Peter also during the Festival of the No-yeast Bread.* **4**So when he got his hands on Peter, he threw him in jail and ordered four squads of soldiers to guard him. Each squad was made up of four men. He planned to bring Peter out again for a trial before the people after the Passover. **5**So Peter was being closely guarded in jail, and at the

same time the church was praying with all their might that God would help Peter.

God Gets Peter out of Jail

43

6The night before Herod was going to bring him back out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, tied up with two chains. There were also guards keeping watch in front of the door into the jail. **7**But suddenly one of the Lord's angels was standing right there in the cell, and the room was full of light. Then the angel tapped Peter on the side and woke him up, and said to him, "Quick! Get up!" And right away the chains fell off his hands.

8Then the angel said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals!" And when Peter had done so, the angel said to him, "Now put on your long outer cloak and follow me!" **9**So Peter walked out of the cell and followed the angel. He didn't know that what the angel was doing was real, but he thought he was having a dream. **10**After they went past the first guard post, and then the second one, they came to the iron gate that led outside into the street. And this gate opened up for them all by itself, and out they went. They went just one block, and then the angel suddenly disappeared.

11Then Peter realized what had happened. And he said to himself, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from Herod and everything the Jewish people were expecting to do to me." **12**And now that he understood everything, he went to Mary's house,* where there were quite a few people gathered together praying. Mary is the mother of John Mark.

13When Peter knocked on the door of the outside gate, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. **14**And when she recognized Peter's voice, she was so happy that she didn't open the gate. Instead, she ran back into the house and told the others that Peter was standing outside in front of the gate.

15The people inside said to her, "You're crazy!"

But she kept on saying that it was true.

Then they said, "It's his angel!"

16But Peter kept pounding on the gate door. And when they finally opened the gate and saw him, they were really amazed.

17Then Peter held up his hand, asking them to be quiet, and told them how the Lord had gotten him out of jail. And at the end, he said, "Go and tell James* and my brothers about this." Then he left the house and went to a different place.

18As soon as it got light the soldiers were terribly excited and worried about what had happened to Peter.

19And when Herod looked all over for him and didn't find him, he questioned the guards and ordered them to be taken out and killed.* Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there for a while.

Herod Agrippa Dies

44

20At this time Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. But one day a group of these people got together and went to see Herod. First they asked Blastus, the king's personal bodyguard and secretary, to tell the King that they wanted to see him and make peace, because their country got its food supplies from the king's country.

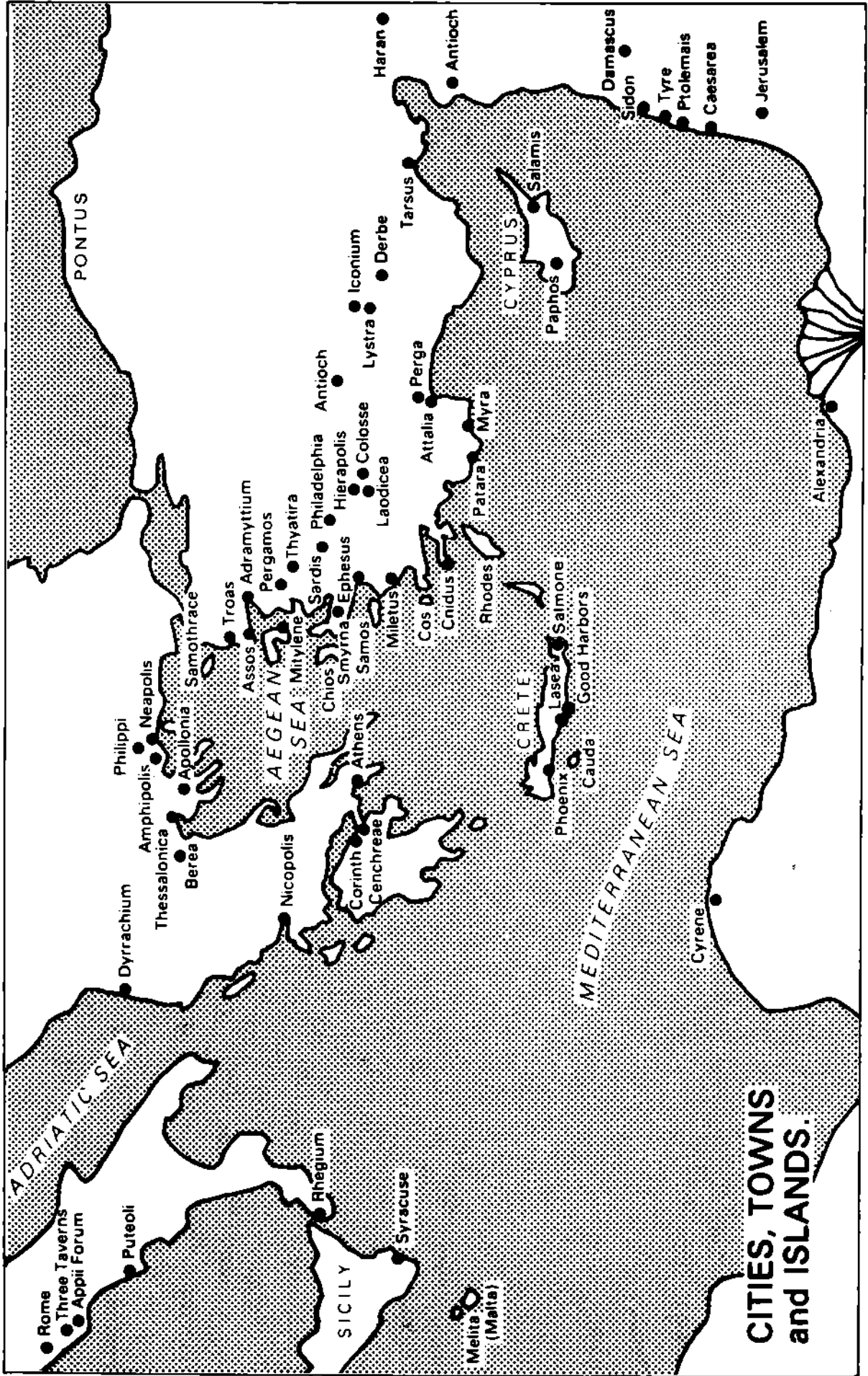
21So on the appointed day Herod got all dressed up in his king's robes and sat down in his special chair on the platform* and made a long speech to those people. **22**And when he finished, they all shouted, "This is God talking, not a man!"

23And right away one of the Lord's angels struck Herod with a terrible disease, because he didn't give the glory and honor to God, and he died* when his insides were eaten up by worms.

24And now God's Word kept on growing and spreading.

25And when Barnabas and Saul had delivered the gifts they had brought to the people in Jerusalem, they went back to Antioch. And they brought John Mark along with them.

(James' letter)*



**CITIES, TOWNS
and ISLANDS.**

PAUL'S FIRST TRIP (47-49)*

Barnabas and Saul are Sent Out

47

13 At that time the prophets* and teachers* in the church in Antioch were Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Menahen, and Saul. Simeon was called "Blacky", Lucius was from Cyrene, and Menahen had been a close friend of Governor Herod. **2** And one day while the people were going without food and worshiping the Lord, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Give me Barnabas and Saul for a job that I have called them to do." **3** So after the members had gone without food and prayed, they put their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them off.

The Two Apostles Begin Their Work in Cyprus 47

4 And now that the Holy Spirit had sent them out, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed off to Cyprus. **5** And when they landed at Salamis, they went to the meeting houses* of the Jews and delivered God's message to the people. They had also taken John Mark along as their helper.

6 Then they went through the whole island as far as Paphos. There they met a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus,* who was a magus* (wise man). **8b** His Greek name was Elymas, which means "the great one",* **7** and he was living at the palace of the governor, Sergius Paulus (Paul). This governor was a very smart man, and he sent word to Barnabas and Saul that he wanted to see them, because he wanted to hear what God had to say to him. **8a** But Elymas kept on arguing with Barnabas and Saul, **8c** trying to keep the governor from believing what they were saying.

9 And finally Saul, whose Roman name was also Paul, was so filled with the Holy Spirit that he stared at Elymas **10** and said, "You son of the devil! You're full of all kinds of dishonest things and evil tricks. You're an enemy of everything that is right and pleasing to God. Won't you ever stop trying to make the Lord's

straight paths crooked? ¹¹Now therefore I'm going to tell you something. The Lord is going to strike you with His hand, and you're going to be blind for a while. You won't even be able to see the light of the sun." And immediately a kind of misty darkness covered his eyes, and he walked around, looking for some people to lead him by the hand. ¹²And when the governor saw what had happened, he was so completely amazed that he believed everything Paul and Barnabas had taught him about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Go to Antioch in Pisidia 47

¹³After this Paul and his friends put out to sea from Paphos and went to Perga, in Pamphylia.* But when they got there, John left them and went back to Jerusalem. ¹⁴Then Paul and Barnabas left Perga and went up through the mountains until they arrived in Antioch, in Pisidia. And on Saturday they went to the meeting house* and sat down.

¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the officers of the meeting house sent a message to them which said, "Friends and brothers, if you have anything to say to the people that will comfort or encourage them, please speak to us."

¹⁶So Paul got up and held up his hand for them to be quiet, and then he said, "My fellow Israelites and those who fear God,* listen to me! ¹⁷The God of our nation of Israel chose our forefathers and made them a great nation while they were living as foreigners in Egypt. Then He led them out of Egypt with His mighty power, ¹⁸and took care of them in the desert for about forty years. ¹⁹And then after He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He made them the owners of that land. ²⁰All this took about four hundred and fifty years.

"After this He gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹And from that time on the people of Israel began to ask for a king. So God gave

them Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who was their king for forty years. ²²Then God got rid of Saul and made David their next king. And He told everyone what He thought of David when He said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, to be a man I really like. He will do everything I want'.⁺ ²³And it was from this man David's family that God gave to Israel their Savior Jesus, just as He had promised to do.*

²⁴"But before Jesus appeared, John spread the news to all the people of Israel that they must change their minds and their way of living and be baptized. ²⁵And when John was finishing up his work, he kept on saying, 'Who do you think I am? I'm not the promised Savior.* But I'm telling you that He's coming right behind me, and I'm not good enough to even untie the sandal straps on His feet'.*

²⁶"My friends and brothers, both those children of Abraham's family, and also those of you who fear God, the message about this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷You see, the people who live in Jerusalem and their leaders didn't recognize this Savior. And they didn't understand the words of the prophets which are read every Saturday.* So they condemned this Savior to death, and made the words of the prophets come true. ²⁸Even though they couldn't find one single reason to put Him to death, they asked Pilate to have Him killed. ²⁹And when they had made everything God says about this Savior come true, He was taken down from the cross and put in a cave where they buried the dead.

³⁰"But God raised Him back to life from the dead, ³¹and those people who had come along with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem saw Him for many days. And those people are the eyewitnesses who are telling the people of Israel about Him. ³²And we are the ones who are now bringing you the Good News about the promise which was given to our forefathers. ³³We're

telling you that when God caused Jesus to be born, He kept that promise. And we who are their children are the ones who saw Him keep it. It's just as God says in the second Psalm,

'You are My Son.

Today I have become Your Father'.⁺

34 And we're also telling you that since God has raised Him back to Life from the dead, He is never going to rot and decay, just as God says,

'I will give you the same promises I gave to David, promises you can depend on'.⁺

35 Here He was talking about what He says in another place -

'You won't let Your Holy One rot and decay'.⁺

36 "Of course after David had served the people of his time, as God had planned, he fell asleep* and was buried with his forefathers, and his body rotted and decayed. **37** But the One whom God raised back to Life again did not rot and decay.

38a "And so my friends and brothers, you must know that God is telling you that your sins are forgiven through this Man, **39** and that every person who believes in Him is perfectly holy in God's sight and innocent **38b** of all sins. And the Law of Moses could never make you perfectly holy in God's sight.*

40 "Watch out therefore, so that what God says in the prophets doesn't happen to you -

41 'Pay attention, you people who make fun of Me!

You must be astonished and then disappear
from the earth,

because I'm going to do something in your time.

And it's something you would never believe,
even if someone told you'.⁺

42 Later, as Paul and Barnabas were leaving the meeting house, the people begged them to come back the next Saturday and talk to them again about these things. **43** And when everyone had left the meeting house, many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas, and many of the God-fearing foreigners did too.

And the two of them kept on talking with these people, trying to show them that they must keep on living in God's love, which no one deserves.

44On the next Saturday almost everyone in town gathered together at the meeting house to hear what the Lord had to say. **45**But when the Jews saw the crowds, they became jealous, and they began to argue against the things Paul was saying. And as they did so, they said a lot of insulting things about Paul.

46Paul and Barnabas however spoke boldly and clearly. "We had to bring God's message to you people first," they said. "But since you don't want anything to do with that message, and don't consider yourselves fit to have eternal Life, we want you to know that we're going to turn to the people of the other nations.* **47**You see, that's what the Lord has commanded us to do when He said,

'I have made you a light for the other nations,
so that you will bring salvation to the
farthest corner of the earth'."†

48When the people who weren't Jews heard this, they were filled with joy, and they kept on saying that this message from the Lord was the greatest thing they had ever heard. And all those whom God had chosen to have eternal Life came to believe in Jesus. **49**And so the Lord's message kept on spreading through the whole province.

50The Jews however got the most important God-fearing women and the leading men of the city all excited, and stirred up so much hatred against Paul and Barnabas that they threw them out of town. **51**So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust of that city off their feet to show them that they were all through with them,* and went to Iconium. **52**But the Lord's followers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The Good News Comes to Iconium

48

14 The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish meeting house* and

spoke in such a way that a big crowd of Jews and Greeks came to believe in Jesus. ²But the Jews who didn't believe got the people of the other nations* all excited and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³The two apostles however stayed there for quite a while, speaking boldly and clearly about the Lord. And the Lord gave them the power to work miracles and do wonderful things. In this way He let everyone know what He thought about their message, which told about His love which no one deserves. ⁴So the people of the city were divided. Some were with the Jews, and some with the apostles.

⁵But then the people of the other nations and the Jews got together with the city officials and decided to torture the apostles and stone them to death. ⁶So when the apostles found out about this, they left town and went to the cities of Lystra and Derbe and the area around them in Lycaonia. ⁷And they kept on spreading the Good News there.

The Good News Comes to Lystra

48

⁸In Lystra there was a man who couldn't use his feet, because he had been crippled from the time he was born, and had never walked in his life. ⁹And as he sat there listening to Paul talk, Paul stared at him and saw that he had the faith to be made well. ¹⁰So he shouted at the man, "Stand up on your feet! Straight up!" And the man jumped up and started to walk around.

¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they all started to shout in their Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us, looking like men." ¹²They called Barnabas "Zeus", and Paul "Hermes", since he was the one who was doing the speaking. ¹³And since the temple of Zeus was just outside of town, in front of the city gates, the priest of Zeus brought some bulls and wreaths of flowers to the gates. He and the crowds of people wanted to offer sacrifices to the apostles.

¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard

about this, they tore their clothes and ran out into the middle of the crowd. **15**"Friends!" they yelled, "Why are you doing this? We're human beings too, people just like you. We're bringing you the Good News that you must turn away from these worthless things to the living God, 'who has made the heavens, the land, the oceans, and everything in them'.⁺ **16**In the past He has allowed all nations to live as they wanted. **17**But at the same time He has never failed to show people who He is and what He's like by always doing good things, like giving you rain from heaven, and the different seasons, each with its own crop, and filling you with food and your hearts with happiness." **18**But even though the apostles told them all these things, they were just barely able to stop the crowds from offering sacrifices to them.

19But after a while the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra. And they talked the crowds into believing that they were right. And after they had thrown stones at Paul, they dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead. **20**But when the Lord's followers gathered around him, Paul got up and went back into town.

The Apostles Go to Derbe and Return Home 49

So the next day Paul and Barnabas left town and went to Derbe, **21**and brought the Good News to the people of that city. And after they won^{*} quite a few new followers for the Lord, they went back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. **22**In each city they filled the Lord's followers with new strength and encouraged them to hold on to their faith, as they told them that we must go through a lot of suffering and troubles to get into God's Kingdom.* **23**And in each church they went without food* and prayed and appointed officers for the people. And then they turned the people over to the Lord in whom they had put their trust.

24Then they went through Pisidia and back to Pamphylia. **25**And after they brought God's message to

the people in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶From there they sailed off to Antioch, where they had been turned over to God's loving care to do the job which they had now finished.

²⁷And when they got back, they called the church together and told them about all the things God had done as He worked with them, and how He had opened up the door of faith for the people of the other nations.* ²⁸And then they stayed there for quite a long time with the Lord's followers.

Must All Believers be Circumcised?

49

¹⁵During this time some men came down to Antioch from Judea and began to teach the brothers that "If you aren't circumcised the way Moses says, you can't be saved".* ²And after Paul and Barnabas had a big fight and argument with these men, the brothers decided that Paul and Barnabas and some other men from their group should go up and talk to the apostles and officers of the church in Jerusalem about this question.

³The church therefore sent them on their way, and they went through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling their story about how the people of the other nations* had turned to the Lord. And all the brothers and sisters were very happy to hear this.

⁴When they got to Jerusalem, they were given a warm welcome by the church, the apostles and the officers. And then Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done as He worked with them.

⁵But some of the believers who were members of the group known as the Pharisees* got up and said, "We must circumcise those people, and tell them that they must keep Moses' Law".*

⁶So the apostles and the officers met together to look into this question. ⁷And after a lot of talk back and forth Peter got up and said to them, "My friends and brothers, you know that a long time ago God chose me to be the one through whom the people of the other

nations were to hear our message of Good News and come to faith. ⁸And God, who knows what's in people's hearts, let everyone know what He thinks of those people when He gave them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us. ⁹He didn't find any difference at all between us and them, since He has made their hearts clean by faith. ¹⁰Therefore why are you now trying to put God to the test by putting a yoke on the necks of those followers which neither our fathers nor we have been able to carry? ¹¹We can't do that! We believe that we're saved by the love of our Lord Jesus which we don't deserve, and those people are saved in exactly the same way.".*

¹²After this the whole crowd was absolutely quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about all the miracles and wonderful things God had done through them among the people of the other nations.

¹³And when they finished speaking, James* spoke up and said, "My friends and brothers, listen to me! ¹⁴Simeon has told us how God first showed His concern for the people of the other nations by taking some of them to be His very own people. ¹⁵And what the prophets say agree with this, just as the Bible says -

¹⁶ ' "After this I will come back,
and I will rebuild David's tent*
which has fallen down.

I will put all the pieces which have been torn
down back together, and set it up again,
¹⁷ so that all the other people in the world will
try to find the Lord,
and people of all the nations, will be among
those whom I have made members of
My family."

These are the words of the Lord, who has been
making these things'+ ¹⁸known since the
beginning of time.

¹⁹"So this is what I think. We mustn't make it hard for the people of the other nations who are turning to God. ²⁰Instead, we must write to them and tell

them to stay away from things that have been made 'unclean' by idols, from sexual sins, from the meat of any animal that has been strangled, and from blood. ²¹After all, for hundreds of years Moses has had men in every city who are spreading his message, since what he wrote is read aloud in the meeting houses* every Saturday."

²²After this speech the apostles and the officers met with the whole church and decided to elect some men from their group and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. So they elected Judas Barsabbas and Silas, who were both highly respected by the brothers. ²³And then they wrote this letter -

"This letter comes from your brothers, the apostles and the church officers in Jerusalem. And we send our greetings to the brothers and sisters of the other nations in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia!

²⁴"We have heard that some men from our group have come to you and caused you a lot of trouble by what they said, and that they're keeping you all upset. But we didn't give them any orders to tell you such things.

²⁵"So we have had a meeting, and have elected some men, whom we are sending to talk to you. They will be coming with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶who have risked their lives for our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷The men we're sending are Judas and Silas, who will be telling you these same things in their own words.

²⁸"You see, the Holy Spirit has decided that we mustn't ask you to do anything more than these necessary things, and we agree with this. ²⁹You must stay away from food that has been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of animals that have been strangled, and from sexual sins. If you will keep away from these things, you will be doing just fine. Stay well!"

³⁰So the four men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the believers together

and gave them the letter. ³¹And when they read the letter, the believers there were filled with joy because of the comfort and encouragement it gave them. ³²And since Judas and Silas were also prophets,* they both gave a long speech in which they filled the brothers and sisters with new courage and strength. ³³And after they had stayed there for some time, the brothers and sisters sent them back with a friendly greeting to those who had sent them.

³⁵Paul and Barnabas however stayed in Antioch, explaining the Bible* to the people and spreading the Lord's message of Good News, along with many other men. (Galatians)*

PAUL'S SECOND TRIP (50-53)*

Paul Revisits the Churches in Galatia

50

³⁶After a while Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and see how our brothers are getting along in each one of the cities where we brought them the Lord's message."

³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along with them again, ³⁸but Paul didn't think it was right to take a man along with them who had gone off and left them in Pamphylia, and hadn't gone along with them to finish their job. ³⁹And they got into such an angry argument that they separated, and each one went his own way. Barnabas took Mark along with him and sailed off to Cyprus. ⁴⁰And Paul chose Silas, and after the brothers had turned him over to the Lord's loving care, he started out ⁴¹and went through Syria and Cilicia,* strengthening the churches as he went.

¹⁶ Paul arrived in Derbe first, and then went to Lystra, where there was one of the Lord's followers whose name was Timothy. His mother was a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ²The brothers who lived in Lystra and Iconium had nothing but good things to say about Timothy, ³and Paul wanted this man to go along with him. So he took him and

circumcised* him, because all the Jews who lived in that area knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴And as they went through the cities of Galatia, they gave the believers a copy of the rules which the apostles and the officers in Jerusalem had made for them to keep.* ⁵So the churches grew stronger in their faith, and the number of believers kept on growing larger every day.

Paul is Guided to Troas

50

⁶They kept on going through the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia,* since the Holy Spirit stopped them from delivering their message in the province of Asia. ⁷And when they got to the border of Mysia, they tried to get into Bithynia, but Jesus' Spirit didn't let them go in. ⁸So they travelled along the Mysian border and went down to Troas.

How the Good News Came to Macedonia

50

⁹That night Paul had a dream in which he saw a man from Macedonia standing in his room, begging him, "Please come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰And when Paul saw this strange sight, we* started right away to look for some way to leave town and get to Macedonia, since we were sure that God had called us to bring the Good News to those people.

¹¹So we put out to sea from Troas and sailed straight across to Samothrace, and on the next day we sailed into Neapolis. ¹²From there we went to Philippi, which is a Roman colony, and an important city in the district of Macedonia; and we stayed there several days.

¹³On Saturday* we left the city and walked along the river,* since we thought there was a place of prayer there. And when we got there, we sat down and began to talk to the women who had gathered there.

¹⁴One of the women was named Lydia. She was a purple cloth dealer from the city of Thyatira. She also also a God-fearing woman;* and as she listened, the Lord opened up her heart to pay attention to what

Paul was saying. **15**And after she and all the people who lived in her house had been baptized, she said to us, "Now that you know that I believe in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she kept on insisting until we did.

Paul and Silas are Thrown in Jail

16One day as we were going to the prayer place, a slave girl came up to us. She had an evil spirit inside of her which could tell what was going to happen in the future, and she made a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. **17**She followed along behind Paul and the rest of us, yelling at the top of her voice, "These men are servants of the one true God, and they're telling you about the road* you must follow to be saved." **18**And she kept on doing this for many days. And one day Paul got so tired of it that he turned around and said to the spirit, "By the authority of Jesus Christ I'm ordering you to come out of her!" And it came out right then and there.

19But when the girl's owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they grabbed Paul and Silas and hauled them to the city officials in the town square.* **20**And when they brought them to the two governors* they said, "These men are stirring up trouble in our city. They're Jews, **21**and they're telling us about new ways of doing things which are against the law for us Romans to accept and do."

22And when the crowd also joined in this attack on Paul and Silas, the governors tore off their clothes and ordered the soldiers to beat them with rods. **23**And after they had given them a terrible beating, the governors threw them in jail and gave orders to the jailer to lock them up tight. **24**And since he had gotten an order like that, the jailer threw them into the inner cell with no windows, and clamped their feet tightly in between two heavy blocks of wood.

The Lord Rescues Paul and Silas

25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26**Then suddenly there was such a terrible earthquake that even the foundations of the jail were shaken and cracked, and all the doors suddenly flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

27When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the jail all standing wide open, he drew his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had all run away.*

28But Paul shouted at the top of his voice, "Don't do yourself any harm! We're all here!"

29So the jailer called for some torches and rushed inside and fell down in front of Paul and Silas, trembling with fear. **30**Then he led them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31And they replied, "You must believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved - you and everyone in your house." **32**Then they told the jailer and the others in his house all about the Lord.

33And even though it was late at night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed off their wounds. And he and everyone in his house were baptized right away. **34**And after that he brought them back to his house and gave them something to eat. And everyone in his house was filled with joy, because now they believed in God.

35The next morning the two governors sent some soldiers to the jail to tell the jailer, "Let those men go!" **36**So the jailer told Paul what they had told him, "The two governors have sent word that you are to be set free. So now you can leave town without any further trouble."

37But Paul said to the soldiers, "First they gave us a terrible beating in public where everyone could see it, even though we hadn't been given any trial or found guilty of any crime. And we happen to be

Roman citizens.* Next they threw us in jail. And now they're going to throw us out of jail without anyone knowing about all this? I should say not! They'll have to come here themselves and personally lead us out of jail."

38So the soldiers went back and reported all this to the two governors. And when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were really frightened, **39**and they came to the jail and apologized to Paul and Silas. Then they brought them out of jail and asked them to please leave town.

40So after they got out, Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house. And when they saw the brothers and sisters, they talked to them so as to fill them with new courage. And then they* left town.

The Good News Comes to Thessalonica

50

17 They took the road that runs through Amphipolis and Apollonia, and arrived in Thessalonica,* where the Jews had a meeting house.* **2**And since Paul always went to the meeting house on Saturday,* he went to their meeting. And for three Saturdays in a row he talked back and forth with them about things in the Bible. **3**And as He did so, He opened up the Bible for them and explained to them that the promised Savior* had to suffer and rise again from the dead. And then he told them, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the promised Savior."

4And some of the Jews believed what Paul said and decided to go along with Paul and Silas.* And a big crowd of God-fearing Greeks* did too, as well as quite a few of the leading women.

5The rest of the Jews however became jealous of Paul and Silas. So they hired some of the worst men they could find in the town square, and gathered a mob of people together and started a riot in the city. And then they went to Jason's house, looking for Paul and Silas, so that they could bring them out to the people. **6**But when they didn't find them, they dragged

Jason and some of the brothers before the city Council. "These men have been starting revolutions all over the world," they yelled, "And now they're here in our city too, ⁷and Jason is keeping them in his house. These people are all doing things that are against the Emperor's laws. They say that there is another king whose name is Jesus."

⁸By saying these things they got the crowd and the city Council all stirred up and excited. ⁹And after they made Jason and the others put up a good-sized amount of money as bail to make sure they wouldn't start a riot, they let them go.

Paul and Silas Bring the Good News to Berea 50

¹⁰That night therefore, as soon as it got dark, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. And as soon as they got there, they went to the Jews' meeting house.* ¹¹These people however were a much better kind of Jews than those in Thessalonica. They accepted what Paul said very eagerly, and then they studied the Bible every day to see if these things were true. ¹²And so many of them came to believe in Jesus, and quite a few of the high class Greek people did too, both men and women.

¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica found out that Paul had been preaching God's Word also in Berea, they went there too, and got the crowds all stirred up and excited. ¹⁴And as soon as that happened, the brothers in Berea sent Paul out of town, and told him to keep on going until he reached the Aegean Sea. Silas and Timothy however stayed in Berea.

Paul Brings the Good News to Athens 51

¹⁵But the men who were serving as Paul's guides brought him all the way to Athens. Then those men started back to Berea, after Paul gave them his instructions for Silas and Timothy, that they should join Paul there in Athens as soon as possible.

¹⁶And while Paul was there in Athens waiting for Silas and Timothy, his heart was filled with holy anger

when he saw how full of idols the city was. ¹⁷On Saturday he talked back and forth with the Jews and the God-fearing foreigners* in their meeting house, and every other day he talked with the people who happened to be in the town square.* ¹⁸And some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them were saying, "What could this blabbermouth be talking about?" But some of the others said, "He seems to be a man who is talking about foreign gods," because Paul was spreading the Good News about Jesus and the resurrection.*

¹⁹So they took Paul and brought him up to the Athens City Council on Mars' Hill.* And when they got there, they said to Paul, "Could we please find out what this new teaching is?" ²⁰After all, you're bringing in some ideas that sound very strange to us. So we want to find out what they mean." ²¹You see, all the citizens of Athens, and the foreigners who live there, spend all their time talking about or hearing about the latest thing.

²²And so Paul stood in front of the Council and said, "Dear friends and citizens of Athens, I see that in every way you people are very religious. ²³For as I was walking through your city, looking over the things you worship, I even found an altar with these words written on it - 'To an unknown god.' Therefore this is the God I'm going to tell you about, the one you're worshiping, even though you don't know Him.

²⁴"This is the God who made the world and everything in it. And even though He is the Lord of heaven and earth, He doesn't live in temples built by men.* ²⁵And there isn't anything men can do for Him, as though He needed anything, since He is the one who gives life and breath and everything else to all people.

²⁶"Starting with one man, He has made every nation in the world. And He made them live in every part of the world, after He had marked out the periods of their history and the exact places where they should live. ²⁷He also made them so that they would try

to find their God, if it were possible for them to hunt around for Him and find Him, although He's never very far away from any one of us. ²⁸After all, it's by His power that we have life and move and exist, as even some of your own poets say,

'For we are also His children'.*

²⁹"Since we are God's children therefore, we shouldn't think that God is like a figure carved in gold or silver or stone, which has been made by some man's skillful hands and imagination.

³⁰"In the past therefore God has overlooked all those times when men didn't know any better. But now He's telling men and women everywhere that they must all change their minds and their way of living. ³¹Because He has set the Day* on which He is going to judge the world in His fair and right way by the Man He has appointed. And He has proven to everyone that all this is true by raising that Man back to Life from the dead."

³²When the Council members heard the words, "raising back to life from the dead," some of them started to make fun of Paul. But some of the others said to him, "We're going to hear what you have to say about this some other time." ³³And so Paul left.

³⁴And some of the men became Paul's followers and came to believe in the Lord. One of them was Dionysius, a member of the Council, and another was a woman named Damaris. And there were several others besides these two.

The Good News Comes to Corinth

51-53

18 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he heard about a Jew named Aquila, who had been born in Pontus. He and his wife Priscilla had just recently come to Corinth from Italy, because the Emperor Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome.* So Paul went to see them, ³and since they both had the same trade, Paul stayed with them and worked with Aquila. They were tentmakers.*

4And every Saturday* he was in the meeting house,* talking with both the Jews and the Greeks, and trying to bring them to believe in Jesus. **(1 Thessalonians)***

5But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul spent all his time speaking to the people, and trying to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the promised Savior.* **6**But since they were fighting against him and saying nasty and insulting things about him, Paul shook their dust off his clothes* and said to them, "You will have to be responsible for your own eternal punishment. My hands are clean. From now on I'm going to go to the people of the other nations".*

7Then he walked out of the meeting house and he and his followers found a new place to meet in a house that belonged to a man named Titius Justus, who was a God-fearing foreigner.* His house was right next door to the meeting house. **8**But Crispus, the President of the meeting house, and all the people who lived in his house, had already come to believe in the Lord. And as the people of Corinth kept on hearing the Good News, many of them became believers and were baptized. **(2 Thessalonians)***

9Then one night the Lord appeared to Paul so that he could see Him, and said, "You mustn't be afraid. Instead, you must keep right on talking, and never stop, **10**because I'm right here with you. And no one is going to lay a hand on you and hurt you, because there are many of My people here in this city." **11**So Paul stayed there in Corinth for a year and a half, explaining God's Word to the people who lived there.

12But during the time that Gallio was the governor of Achaia,* the Jews all got together and rose up against Paul. And they brought him to the governor, who was sitting on his platform,* and said to him, **13**"This fellow is trying to talk people into worshiping God in a way which is against the law."

14Paul was just going to answer when Gallio said to them, "If this man had done something wrong, or

committed some terrible crime, I would rightly have to sit here and put up with you Jews. ¹⁵But since it's just some arguments about what someone said, and some names, and your kind of law, you'll have to settle this among yourselves. I certainly don't want to be a judge of things like this." ¹⁶And then he told his soldiers to drive them away from his platform.

¹⁷So then all the people who were listening grabbed Sosthenes, the President of the meeting house, and began to beat him up right there in front of the governor's platform. And Gallio didn't care what they were doing.

¹⁸And so after Paul had stayed with the brothers and sisters in Corinth for quite a long time, he said 'good-bye' to them and sailed off for Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila along with him. And just before they sailed, Paul shaved his head in Cenchreae, because he had made some promise to God.

¹⁹When they arrived in Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aquila there. And then he went to the meeting house* and talked back and forth with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay longer, however, he said he couldn't. ²¹But when he said 'good-bye', he told them, "I'm going to come back to see you again if this is what God wants." And then he sailed away from Ephesus.

²²And when he landed at Caesarea, Paul went up and said 'hello' to the church in Jerusalem, and then he went down to Antioch.

PAUL'S THIRD TRIP [53-57]*

Paul Visits Galatia Again

June, 53

²³After Paul had spent some time there in Antioch, he left town again. First he went through the district of Galatia, and then through Phrygia,* going from one city to the other, and filling all the Lord's followers with new strength.

Apollos Stops at Ephesus and Goes to Corinth

24A little earlier a Jew named Apollos had come to Ephesus. He had been born in Alexandria, and was a fine speaker, with a great knowledge of the Bible.*

25He had also learned about the Lord's Road,* and the Spirit kept him bubbling over as he talked and explained in detail the things about Jesus in the Old Testament. But he hadn't learned anything beyond John's baptism. **26**So this man began to speak to the Jews very boldly and clearly in the meeting house. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and taught him everything about God's Road.

27And since Apollos wanted to sail across to the province of Achaia, the brothers helped him by writing a letter to the Lord's followers there, telling them to make him welcome. And when he got there, he was a great help to those who were now believers through God's undeserved love. **28**You see, he spoke with great power as he debated with the Jews in public. And he showed very clearly that they were wrong as he used the Bible to prove that Jesus is the promised Savior.

Paul Arrives in Ephesus

Fall, 53

19While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was travelling across the central highlands of the province of Asia and came down to Ephesus. And when he found some of the Lord's followers there, **2**he asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit after you came to believe in the Lord?"

"No sir," they replied. "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

3"Well then," said Paul, "how were you baptized?"

And they answered, "We were baptized the way John said".*

4So Paul explained, "John baptized people when they confessed that they were sorry for their sins and promised that they would change their minds and their way of living." And at the same time he told

them that they must believe in the one who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.

⁵So when they heard this, they were baptized into the Lord Jesus.* ⁶And after Paul put his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to talk in other languages and speak as prophets. ⁷And there were about twelve men in this whole group.

Paul Leaves the Jews to Work with the Greeks 54-55

⁸Paul also went to the meeting house there in Ephesus. And for three months he continued to speak boldly and clearly about God's Kingdom, talking back and forth with the people about the Bible, and trying to bring them to believe.

⁹But then some of the Jews closed their minds and refused to believe. And when they began to say insulting things about the Road in front of the whole group, Paul walked out of the meeting house, and took his followers with him. And every day they continued to talk back and forth together about the Bible in a large room that belonged to Tyrannus, where teachers met with their students. ¹⁰This went on for two years, so that everyone who was living in the province of Asia got to hear the Lord's message, both Jews and Greeks.

¹¹And God also used Paul to work some very unusual miracles. ¹²People even took handkerchiefs and aprons which Paul had touched and brought them to the people who were sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

The Jewish Faith Healers

^{14b}There were also seven Jewish brothers ^{13a}who were travelling around, claiming to be able to drive out demons by using secret oaths. ^{14a}They were the sons of a Jewish head priest named Sceva. ^{13b}And now these men were using the name of the Lord Jesus to heal the people who had evil spirits. So one time when they tried to do this, one of them said, "I'm taking

an oath by the name of Jesus, whom Paul is telling people about, and by His authority I'm ordering you to come out!"

15But the evil spirit said to them, "I know Jesus well, and I know Paul. But who are you people?" **16**And then the man who had the evil spirit inside of him jumped on the brothers and knocked them all down. And He gave them such a terrible beating that they ran out of the man's house all bruised and bloody, and with their clothes all torn off.

The Lord's Work Prospers in Ephesus

17Soon everyone in Ephesus had heard about this, both Jews and Greeks, and everyone was afraid. They all kept on talking about what a wonderful person the Lord Jesus was.

18Many of the believers also came and told about the sinful things they had done. **19**And quite a few of those who had practiced magic brought their books and burned them where everyone could see them. And when they added up the value of all these books, the total was fifty thousand drachmas.* **20**This was the way the Word kept on growing and getting stronger by the Lord's power.

21And after all this happened Paul made up his mind that he would take a trip through the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. "And after I have been there," he said, "I must also see Rome." **22**But after he had sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he stayed on for a while in the province of Asia. **(1 Corinthians)***

The Trouble with the Silversmiths

Fall, 55

23During this time there was almost a riot there in Ephesus because of the Road. **24**You see, there was a silversmith named Demetrius who made little silver models of the temple of the Greek goddess Artemis,* and his business brought in a lot of money for his employees.

25So one day he called all the workers together, along with the men who were working in the trades that were connected with his business, and said to them, "My friends, you know that we get a good living out of this business. **26**And you're seeing and hearing what this fellow Paul has been doing. He has been telling people that gods which are made by human hands aren't gods at all. And he has convinced quite a large crowd of people that he's right, and won them over to these new ideas, not only here in Ephesus, but almost all over the whole province of Asia. **27**And there isn't only the danger that our business will get a bad name, but also that people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis isn't worth coming to at all. Yes, there's the danger that even Artemis herself, whom all of Asia and the whole world worships, will be robbed of her glory and greatness."

28When the crowd heard this, they were filled with anger, and they began to yell, "Artemis of Ephesus is the great goddess!" **29**And soon the whole city was in an uproar. Then some people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, two men from Macedonia who were traveling with Paul, and everybody rushed into the city theater all at once.

30Paul wanted to go into the theater and talk to the people, but the Lord's followers wouldn't let him. **31**And even some of the Council members of the province, who were Paul's friends, sent him a message and begged him not to let the people in the theater get their hands on him.

32Inside the theater the meeting was in an uproar. Some were yelling one thing, and others something else, and most of the people didn't even know why they were there.

33Then the Jews brought a man named Alexander up to the stage, and some of the crowd thought that he was the guilty one. Then Alexander held up his hand for the crowd to be quiet, since he wanted to explain to the crowd that the Jews weren't responsible

for the trouble. **34**But when the crowd saw that he was a Jew, they all started to yell like one man, "Artemis of Ephesus is the great goddess!" And they kept it up for about two hours.

35Finally the Secretary of the City Council got the crowd quieted down. "My friends," he said. "Citizens of Ephesus! What person is there who doesn't know that the city of Ephesus is the caretaker of the temple of the great goddess Artemis, and of her statue which fell down from heaven? **36**Therefore since no one can say that this isn't so, you must quiet down and not be doing anything you haven't thought about carefully. **37**After all, these men you have brought in here haven't robbed or damaged our temple, and they haven't said any insulting things about our god. **38**So if Demetrius and the workers who came here with him want to accuse someone of some crime, the courts meet on regular days, and there are Roman governors here. They'll have to make their accusations to them. **39**And if you have any other business, it will have to be settled at the regular town meeting. **40**The truth is that we're in danger of being accused of starting a riot because of what has happened today, since there isn't any excuse for it. We certainly couldn't give any good reason for this disorderly meeting." **41**And when he finished his speech, he sent everybody home.

Paul Begins His Return Home Fall, 56

20 After the riot was over, Paul sent for the Lord's followers and said what he **(2 Corinthians 10-13)*** could to encourage them. Then he said 'good-bye' and left Ephesus, heading for the province of Macedonia. **2**And he went all through Macedonia, talking with the believers for a long time in each place to encourage them. **(2 Corinthians 1-9)***

And when he came to Greece, **3**he stayed there for three months. **(Romans)***

During that time the Jews worked out a plan to

get rid of Paul. They were going to catch him and kill him just as he was going to get on a boat to sail away for Syria. But Paul found out about it, and decided to go back through Macedonia. ⁴Sopater the son of Pyrrhus, who was from Berea, went along with him. And so did Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, and Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. ⁵All these men went on ahead and waited for us* in Troas. ⁶But we didn't sail away from Philippi until the week of the No-yeast Bread,* and we joined our friends in Troas five days later. And we stayed in Troas seven days.

The Accident in Troas

Spring, 57

⁷Late Sunday afternoon, while we were all gathered together for our communion service, Paul and the brothers who were there were talking back and forth about the Bible. And since Paul was going to leave town the next morning, he kept on talking until midnight. ⁸They were meeting in an upstairs room, where there were quite a few lamps burning, ⁹and there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill. And as Paul kept on talking longer and longer, Eutychus kept on getting sleepier and sleepier. And when he fell asleep, he fell out of the window, three stories to the ground. And when the brothers picked him up, he was dead. ¹⁰But when Paul got down there, he fell on top of the boy, and threw his arms around him and said, "Don't get all excited! He's still alive!"

¹¹Then Paul went back upstairs and broke a little loaf of bread* into pieces and ate them. And after he talked with them again for quite a long time, until the sun came up, he left town. ¹²And everyone was very happy when they took the boy home alive.

The Group Goes on to Miletus

¹³All of us except Paul had gone on ahead to the ship, and had put out to sea, heading for the town of Assos, where we were going to pick Paul up. You see, he had ordered us to do this, since he was going

to travel there on foot.

14And when he met us in Assos, we took him on board and went on to Mitylene. **15**The next day we sailed away from there and arrived at a place just off the island of Chios. The following day we crossed over to Samos, and the day after that we arrived at Miletus. **16**You see, Paul had decided to sail right on by Ephesus, so that he wouldn't have to spend a lot of time in the province of Asia. The reason was that he was in a hurry to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for the Day of Pentecost.*

Paul Talks with the Elders from Ephesus

17But Paul did send a message from Miletus to Ephesus, asking the officers of the church to meet him there. **18**And when they got there, Paul said to them, "You men know how I spent my time all the while I was with you, from the very first day I set foot in the province of Asia. **19**You know how I served the Lord as His slave in the lowliest way possible. And you know about the things which brought tears to my eyes, and the trials and troubles I had when the Jews were plotting against me. **20**You know that nothing ever kept me from telling you or teaching you the things that would be of help to you, either publicly or in your homes. **21**I was always warning both Jews and Greeks that they must change their minds and their way of living, and turn to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.

22"And now here I am on my way to Jerusalem, because the Spirit has told me I must go there. I don't know what's going to happen to me there, **23**except that the Holy Spirit keeps warning me in one city after another that I'm going to run into troubles and be thrown in jail when I get there. **24**But I don't think my life is of any great value to me. I only want it to last long enough so that I can finish running my race,* and finish the work the Lord Jesus gave me to do. And that work is telling people what I know about the Good News of God's love, which no one deserves.

25"I have gone everywhere in your area spreading the news about the Kingdom. And now I know that none of you will ever see me again. **26**Therefore I'm telling you today that it's not my fault if any of you suffer eternal death, **27**because I never let anything keep me from telling you everything about God's plan for your salvation.

28"You must watch out for yourselves! And you must keep watch over your whole flock, in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as the pastors. Yes, He has made you the shepherds of God's church, which Jesus has bought to be His own with His own blood. **29** I know that after I leave, hungry wolves will get into your midst, and they will tear into the flock. **30**Yes, there will even be some of your own men who will rise up and say things that are false, and try to get Jesus' followers to leave their Lord and follow them. **31**Therefore pay attention to what's going on, and remember that for three years, day and night, I never stopped warning each one of you, with tears in my eyes. **32**And so now I'm turning you over to God and to His loving Word, which is able to make you strong and give you all the things God has set aside to give to all His children who are perfectly clean and holy.

33"I have never had any sinful desire for anyone's silver, gold or clothing. **34**You men know that I worked with my own hands to supply my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. **35**In every way possible I have showed you that we must work hard like this to help those who are weak. And remember what our Lord Jesus Himself said, 'Giving makes one much happier than receiving'."*

36And when he finished his speech, they all got down on their knees while he prayed. **37**Then they all began to cry and sob, and one by one, they threw their arms around Paul's neck and covered him with kisses. **38**What made them feel especially sad were Paul's words that they would never see him again. Then they sent him on his way by walking with him down to the ship.

Paul and the Others Arrive in Jerusalem Spring, 57

21 After we left the brothers and put out to sea, we sailed straight across and anchored in the harbor at Cos. The next day we sailed into Rhodes, and the day after that we arrived in Patara. **2**And when we found a ship that was going to Phoenicia, we got on board and put out to sea. **3**And when we got close enough to Cyprus so that we could see land, we kept it on our left and sailed towards Syria, and landed at Tyre, since the ship was going to unload its cargo there.

4Then we hunted around the town and found the Lord's followers, and stayed there seven days. And those people kept telling Paul that the Spirit was telling them that he shouldn't set foot in Jerusalem. **5**But when it was time for us to go, we left their homes to continue our trip. And they all sent us on our way by walking along with us, even the women and children, until we got outside of town. Then after we all got down on our knees on the beach and prayed, **6**we said 'good-bye' to each other. And we got on board our ship, and they went back home.

7And so we finished the last part of our voyage from Tyre, and landed at Ptolemais. And when we got there, we said 'hello' to the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for one day. **8**The next day we left town and went to Caesarea, and when we found Philip's house, we went in and stayed with him. Philip was one of the seven helpers,* and he spent his time spreading the Good News. **9**He also had four unmarried daughters who were speaking as prophets.*

10After we had been there several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11**And when he came to see us, he took Paul's belt and tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'The Jews* in Jerusalem will tie up the man who owns this belt just like this, and hand him over to the people of the other nations'.'"*

12When we heard this, we begged Paul not to go

up to Jerusalem, and so did the people who lived there.

13But Paul answered, "What are you trying to do by crying and sobbing and breaking my heart? After all, speaking for myself, I'm ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus."

14And since we couldn't get him to change his mind, we stopped talking and said, "Whatever the Lord wants must be done."

15So when the time came to leave, we got ready and started out for Jerusalem, **16**and some of the Lord's followers from Caesarea went along with us. They brought us to the house where we would be staying. It belonged to a man named Mnason, from Cyprus, who was one of the Lord's first followers.

Paul Goes to See James and the Elders May, 57

17When we got to Jerusalem, the brothers gave us a warm welcome. **18**And the next day we all went along with Paul to see James.* All the officers were also there. **19**Paul greeted them all, and then, one by one, he told them about all the things God had done among the people of the other nations through his work.

20When they heard this, they began to praise God. And then they said to Paul, "Brother Paul, you see how many, many thousands of believers there are among the Jews now, and they all have a great love for the Law. **21**But they have been told that you're teaching all the Jews who live in the foreign countries to break away from Moses by telling them not to circumcise their children, and not to go on living the way we Jews have always lived.

22"So now what should we do? They will certainly hear that you're here in Jerusalem. **23**Therefore you must do what we're telling you. There are four of our men here who have made a special promise to God. **24**Take these men with you and make yourself 'clean',* just as they're going to do. Then pay their

expenses for them,* so that they can have their heads shaved.* Then everyone will know that there is nothing to these stories that people have heard about you, but that you're keeping the Law and living the way it says we must live.

25"And so far as the believers of the other nations are concerned, we have personally written them a letter, telling them that we have decided that they must stay away from things that have been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of animals that have been strangled, and from sexual sins".*

26So the next day Paul took the men and they all made themselves "clean". Then he went to the Temple* and told the priests when their period of "cleansing" would be over,* and the sacrifice for each one would be offered.

Paul is Arrested in the Temple-yard

27But when the seven days were almost over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul there in the Temple-yard. And they got the whole crowd of people in the Temple-yard all stirred up. Then they grabbed Paul **28**and yelled, "Fellow Israelites! Help us! This is the man who is going all over, teaching and saying things to everyone that are against our people and our Law and this Temple. And besides this, he has even brought some Greeks into the area reserved for Jews,* and has made this holy place of ours 'unclean'."

29You see, sometime earlier they had seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, with Paul in the city, and they assumed that Paul had brought him into the Women's Court.*

30Soon the whole city was alive with excitement, and the people were all running together. And after they grabbed Paul, they dragged him outside the Temple-yard and quickly locked the gates.

31While the crowd was trying to kill Paul, someone sent word to the Roman colonel in charge of the regiment that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32So the colonel quickly took some of his captains

and soldiers and hurried down to the crowd. And as soon as the people saw the colonel, they stopped beating Paul. **33** Then the colonel came up to Paul and arrested him, and ordered his men to tie him up with two chains. And then he began to ask questions about who Paul was, and what he had done.

34 Some of the people in the crowd were yelling one thing, and others something else. And since he wasn't able to find out just what was going on because of the noise, the colonel ordered his men to take Paul into the fort.* **35** When Paul got to the steps however, the soldiers had to carry him, because the crowd was so wild. **36** You see, the whole crowd of Jews was following along behind them yelling, "Kill him!"

Paul Speaks to the Crowd to Defend Himself

37 But just as they were going to take Paul into the fort, he said to the colonel, "May I say something to you?"

And the colonel replied, "You know how to speak Greek? **38** Then you aren't that Egyptian who started a revolution a little while ago and led four thousand 'dagger-men'* out into the desert, are you?"

39 And Paul answered, "I'm a Jew, born in Tarsus, in the province of Cilicia, and I'm a citizen of one of the most important cities. And I'm asking you to let me talk to the people."

40 So when the colonel gave him permission to do so, Paul stood on the steps and held up his hand, asking the people to be quiet. And when they were all perfectly quiet, he began to speak to them in their Aramaic language.* **22** "My dear friends," he said, "young and old, listen to what I have to say to you now about the things I have been accused of."

2 When the crowd heard that he was speaking to them in Aramaic, they quieted down even more. **3** So Paul said, "I'm a Jew, born in Tarsus, Cilicia. But I was brought up here in this city as one of Gamaliel's* students. He gave me a very complete education in

the Law that was given to our forefathers. And I have a great love for God, just as all you people have today.

4"I'm the man who hunted down the people who were travelling on this Road* like they were animals, and killed them. I put them in chains and threw them in jail, both men and women. **5**And the Head Priest and the whole Council* can tell you that I'm telling the truth. They gave me letters telling the brothers who live in Damascus who I was. And when I started out for that city I was going to bring all the followers of Jesus I could find there back in chains to Jerusalem to be punished.*

Then I Became a Christian . . .

6"But then something happened to me while I was on my way. I was getting close to Damascus, and it was about noon, when all of a sudden a great light flashed out of the sky all around me. **7**And after I fell down on the ground, I heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you hunting Me down like an animal?'

8"I answered, 'Who are you, sir?'

"And the voice said to me, 'I'm Jesus the Nazorite,* the one you're hunting down like an animal.' **9**The men who were with me saw the light, but they didn't hear the voice of the person who was talking to me.

10"Then I asked Him, 'What shall I do, Lord?'

"And He said to me, 'Get up on your feet and go into Damascus. There someone will tell you about all the things God has ordered you to do.' **11**But then I couldn't see anything, because that light had been so bright. So the men who were with me took me by the hand and led me into Damascus.

12a"And when I got there, a man named Ananias **13a**came to see me. **12b**He was a God-fearing man who tried his best to keep the Law, and all the Jews who lived in Damascus had nothing but good things to say about him. **13b**He stood over me and said, 'Brother Saul, see again!' And at that same moment as I looked at Him, I got my sight back!

14"Then Ananias said, 'The God of our forefathers has chosen you. He wants you to know what He wants done, and to see the Man who is without sin, and to hear Him speak to you personally. **15**Because you're going to be a witness who will tell all men and women what you have seen and heard and what you know about this Man. **16**And now what are you waiting for? Get up on your feet and take this Man as your Lord. And then you must be baptized and wash away your sins!'

. . . And How I was Sent to the Other Nations

17"Later* I went back to Jerusalem, and one day as I was praying in the Temple-yard* it was just as though I had fallen asleep and was having a dream, in which **18** I saw Jesus. He was saying to me, 'Hurry up, and get out of Jerusalem as fast as you can, because the people here aren't going to believe what you tell them about Me'.*

19"And I said, 'Lord, these people know that I'm the one who was throwing the people who believe in You in jail, and beating them up in all the meeting houses. **20**And when your witness Stephen was being killed, I was standing right there, thinking they were doing the right thing, and guarding the clothes of the men who were killing him'.*

21"But He said to me, 'Get going! Because I'm going to send you far away to the people of the other nations!'.*

Paul's Conversation with the Colonel

22The people listened to Paul until he spoke the words, "the people of the other nations," and then they all started to shout, "Wipe this fellow off the face of the earth, for he shouldn't be allowed to live!"

23They were all shouting and throwing off their outer cloaks and throwing dust up in the air. **24**So the colonel ordered his men to bring Paul into the fort, and told them to give him a whipping while they questioned him, so that he could find out why the people were yelling at Paul like this.

25But when they got his arms all stretched out with the leather straps, Paul said to the captain who was standing there, "Does the law allow you to whip a Roman citizen who hasn't been found guilty of any crime"?*

26When the captain heard that, he went to the colonel and reported what Paul had said. "Think about what you're about to do," he said, "because this man is a Roman citizen!"

27So the colonel went to Paul and said to him, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?" And when Paul said, "Yes," **28**the colonel answered, "I paid a great deal of money to become a citizen."

And Paul replied, "But I was born a Roman citizen."

29As soon as Paul said this, the men who were going to question him moved away from him. And the colonel was also afraid, now that he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen, and that he had put him in chains.

Paul is Brought before the Sanhedrin May, 57

30But the colonel still wanted to find out what it really was that the Jews were accusing Paul of doing. So the next day he called the head priests and the whole Sanhedrin together for a meeting. Then he took off Paul's chains and brought Paul down into the meeting.

23 And Paul looked all around the room, looking each man right in the eye. Then he said, "My dear friends and brothers, I'm a man who has lived for God as a member of His Kingdom with a perfectly clear conscience right up to this present day . . ."

2But then the Head Priest Ananias ordered the men who were standing close to Paul to hit him on the mouth.

3And then Paul said to Ananias, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall!* You sit there judging me according to the Law, while you break the Law yourself by ordering your men to hit me."

⁴Some of the men who were standing there said, "You're saying some nasty things about God's Head Priest."

⁵And Paul replied, "My brothers, I didn't know he was the Head Priest. It's true that the Bible says, 'You mustn't say bad things about the ruler of your people'."⁺

⁶Of course Paul knew that one part of the Sanhedrin were Sadducees* and the others were Pharisees.* So now he spoke in a loud, clear voice, "My dear friends and brothers, I'm a Pharisee, and my family have all been Pharisees for generations. I'm on trial today because of the hope that the dead are going to come back to life again."

⁷And as soon as he said this, an argument started up between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the Council was split right in two. ⁸You see, the Sadducees say that the dead can't come back to life, and that there is no such thing as an angel or a spirit; but the Pharisees believe and teach all these things. ⁹There was a lot of shouting and yelling.

Then some of the scribes* who were Pharisees stood up and said to their opponents, "We don't find anything wrong with this man. And if a spirit or an angel really did talk to him . . ."

¹⁰But then the argument became so fierce that the colonel was afraid they would tear Paul to pieces. So he ordered his soldiers to come down and get Paul out of the meeting and bring him back into the fort.

¹¹And that same night the Lord came and stood right at Paul's side and said to him, "Be brave! You have told the people in Jerusalem what you know about me. Now you must do the same thing in Rome."

The Jews Plot to Kill Paul

¹²The next morning some of the Jews formed a plot and took an oath that they wouldn't eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul, and they asked God to destroy them if they didn't keep their promise.

13There were more than forty men who bound themselves together by this oath. **14**Then these men went to the head priests and some of the members of the Council* and said, "We have taken an oath that we will taste no food or drink until we have killed Paul, and we have asked God to destroy us if we don't keep our promise. **15**Now therefore, you men take some other members of the Sanhedrin along with you and go to the colonel, and ask him to bring Paul down for another meeting with you. Tell him that you're going to get some more accurate information about him and what he has done. And we're ready right now to kill him before he gets there."

16But Paul's nephew, his sister's boy, happened to be right there and heard about the trap. So he went to the fort and told Paul about it. **17**And Paul called one of the captains and said to him, "Take this young man to the colonel. He has something to tell him."

18The captain therefore took the boy and brought him to the colonel and said, "The prisoner Paul sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to tell you."

19So the colonel took the boy by the hand and led him off where they could be alone, and asked him, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

20And the young man answered, "The Jews* have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to a meeting of the Sanhedrin tomorrow, pretending that they are going to get some more accurate information about him. **21**But sir, you mustn't do what they ask. You see, more than forty of their men are laying a trap for him. These men have taken an oath that they won't eat or drink anything until they have killed Paul, and they have asked God to destroy them if they don't keep their promise. And they're all ready right now to carry out their plan. They're just waiting for you to promise to do what they ask."

22The colonel then ordered the young man not to tell anyone that he had told him all this, and sent him home.

Paul is Sent to Caesarea**May-June, 57**

23Next the colonel called two of his captains and said to them, "Take two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and get them ready to go to Caesarea by nine o'clock tonight. **24**And have some mules ready for Paul to ride on, so that they can get him safely through to Felix, the Roman governor."

25He also wrote a letter, which said something like this -

26"From Claudius Lysias,
to His Honor the Governor, Felix:
Greetings!

27The Jews had caught this man and were going to kill him. But when I learned that he's a Roman citizen, I was right there with my soldiers and rescued him.

28And since I wanted to find out just what it was that they were accusing him of doing, I brought him down to a meeting of their Sanhedrin. **29**There I found that they were accusing him of things having to do with their law, but nothing for which he should be put to death or in prison.

30Then I was told that some of the Jews were going to try to kill the man, and as soon as I learned that, I sent him to you. I have also told his accusers to bring their charges against him before you."

31The soldiers therefore followed their orders and took Paul and brought him to Antipatris that night.

32And the next day they started back to the fort, and left the horsemen to take Paul the rest of the way.

33So when the horsemen got to Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and also handed Paul over to him.

34After the governor had read the letter, he asked Paul which province he was from. And when Paul answered that he was from Cilicia, **35**the governor

said, "I'll give you a full hearing when your accusers get here." Then he gave orders that Paul should be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

The Jews Bring Their Charges before Felix June, 57

24 Five days later Ananias the Head Priest came down to Caesarea with some of the members of the Council and a lawyer named Tertullus, and told the governor what they had against Paul. **2**And after Paul was brought in, Tertullus began to tell the governor that Paul had done a lot of wrong things. "Your Honor, Lord Felix," he said, "we are enjoying a period of great peace and quiet because of you, and improvements are being made in every way and in every place for the good of this nation of ours through your far-sighted planning and wisdom. **3**And we receive all this with most hearty thanks.

4"And since I don't want to keep you here for a long time and bore you with our problems, I beg you to listen briefly in your kind and considerate way to what we have to say. **5**You see, we have found this man to be a real troublemaker. He is starting riots and revolutions among the Jewish people all over the world, and he's a leader of the group known as the Nazorites.* **6**He even tried to make our Temple-yard 'unclean', and so we arrested him. **8**You can question him yourself and get the full truth about all these things that we're accusing him of doing."

9The Jews also spoke up from time to time, saying that these things were true.

Paul Answers the Charges

10Then, when the governor nodded his head to Paul, telling him that it was now his turn to speak, Paul replied, "I know that you have been the judge for this nation of ours for many years. And therefore I can defend myself against these accusations with a cheerful heart. **11**You can easily find out for yourself that it wasn't more than twelve days ago that I went up to Jerusalem to worship. **12**And no one ever found

me arguing with anyone in the Temple-yard, or getting any crowd stirred up in the meeting houses or anywhere in the city. ¹³And they're not able to give you any kind of proof for these things that they are now accusing me of doing.

¹⁴"I do admit this one thing to you, that I worship and serve the God of our fathers by following 'the Road',* which they say is a wrong one. And I believe everything that is written in our Law and in the books of our prophets. ¹⁵I have the same trust and hope in our God that these men are looking forward to, that there is going to be a time when the dead will come back to life, both those who have done what God says is right, and those who have done wrong things. ¹⁶And because of this, I always do my best to have a clear conscience before God and men at all times.

¹⁷"After being gone for several years, I came back to Jerusalem to give some gifts to the poor people in my country, and to offer sacrifices, as I always do. ¹⁸And while I was doing this, they found me in the Temple-yard* after I had made myself 'clean'.* But there was no crowd of people with me, and there was no noise or disturbance. ¹⁹It was some Jews from the province of Asia who started the trouble. They're the ones who should be here in your court, telling you about my crimes, if they really have anything against me. ²⁰But since they aren't here, these men must either tell you what crime they found me guilty of when I appeared before the Sanhedrin,* ²¹or else they must tell you that the one and only thing I said when I was standing in their meeting was, 'I'm on trial today in your court because I believe that the dead are going to come back to life'."

²²Felix was a man who knew quite a bit about 'the Road'. So he told them that the trial was over. "When Colonel Lysias comes down here," he said, "I'll get more information, and then I'll decide what must be done in your case." ²³Then he gave orders to the captain to have a man guard Paul at all times, but to let him

move about freely, and not to stop Paul's friends from doing whatever they could to help him.

Paul Stays in Prison Two Years June 57 - August 59

²⁴A few days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jew, and sent for Paul. And they listened to him as he talked about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵But as Paul went on talking about being perfectly holy in God's sight* and controlling one's sinful feelings and desires, and the coming Judgment, Felix became frightened. And he said to Paul, "For the time being, you may go. And when I have the time, I'll send for you." ²⁶At the same time he was hoping Paul would give him some money. And for this reason he would send for Paul quite often and talk with him.

²⁷But after two years went by, Porcius Festus took Felix's place as governor. And since Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor, he left Paul in prison.

Paul Appeals to the Emperor August, 59

²⁵Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²And while he was there, the head priests and the Jewish leaders told him what they had against Paul. Then they begged him ³to do them a favor and send Paul to Jerusalem, since they were planning an ambush to kill him somewhere along the road.

⁴Festus however answered that Paul ~~was~~ being kept under guard in Caesarea, and that he himself was going to leave Jerusalem very soon. ⁵"Therefore," he said, "your leading men will have to come down with me, and if this man has done something wrong, they must tell me what these wrong things are."

⁶So after Festus had stayed there no more than eight or ten days, he went back down to Caesarea. And the very next day he sat down in his special chair on the platform* and gave orders to bring Paul out to him.

⁷When Paul got there, the Jews who had come down

from Jerusalem surrounded him, and told Festus that Paul had done a lot of very bad things, but they didn't have any proof for what they said.

8Then Paul began his defense. "I haven't done anything which is against the Law of the Jews," he said. "I haven't committed any crime against our Temple, and I haven't done anything against the Roman Emperor."

9But since Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor, he said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and let me hear these charges and decide your case there?"

10And Paul replied, "I'm standing here in the Emperor's court, and that's where my case must be decided. I haven't done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. **11**However if I have done anything wrong, or if I have done something for which I deserve to die, I'm not trying to escape the death penalty. But since none of these things they're accusing me of doing are true, no one can hand me over to them as a special favor to them. I'm asking the Emperor to judge my case!"*

12So after Festus had talked things over with his advisers, he said, "You have asked the Emperor to judge your case. You must go to the Emperor!"

Festus Tells King Agrippa about Paul

13Several days later King Agrippa* and Bernice came down to Caesarea to say 'hello' to Festus. **14**And since they stayed there for quite a while, Festus told the king the story about Paul. "There's a man who was left here as a prisoner by Felix," he said. **15**"And when I went to Jerusalem, the head priests and the members of the Jewish Council* accused him of doing some wrong things and asked me to find him guilty and condemn him.

16"I answered that the Romans don't do things that way. I said that they would never do anyone a favor by handing someone over to them to be punished before he had met his accusers face to face in court, and

had a chance to defend himself against their accusations.

17"So when they came back here to Caesarea with me, I didn't waste any time. The very next day I sat down in my special chair on the platform* and gave orders that the man should be brought out. **18**But when his accusers got up to speak, they didn't accuse him of doing any of the crimes I was expecting.

19"Instead, they began to argue with him about some things which have to do with their own religion, and about some dead man named Jesus, whom Paul kept saying is alive.

20"I didn't know how or where to get any information about questions like this, so I asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and have his trial there on these questions. **21**But Paul asked that he be kept under guard until His Majesty could judge his case. So I gave orders that he should be kept under guard until I can send him to the Emperor."

22Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I have been wanting to hear this man myself."

And Festus replied, "Tomorrow you're going to hear him."

23So the next day Agrippa and Bernice came to the palace, all dressed up in their most beautiful clothes, and went into the room where they were going to have the hearing. The top ranking Roman army officers were also there, and the leading men of the city. And when Festus gave the orders, Paul was brought in.

24"King Agrippa," said Festus, "and all of you men who are here with us today, this man you're looking at is the one whom all the Jews have complained about to me, both here and in Jerusalem. They keep on shouting that he mustn't be allowed to live any longer. **25**But I haven't found that he has done anything for which he should be put to death. And when he asked his Majesty to hear his case, I decided to send him to Rome.

26"However I don't have anything definite to say about him in my letter to our Master. And therefore I have brought him in here to you, and especially to you, King Agrippa, so that when this hearing is over, I can have something to put in my letter. **27**After all, it doesn't make any sense to me to send a prisoner without also making it clear why he has been arrested."

Paul Begins His Story to Agrippa

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have our permission to tell your story."

So Paul stretched out his hand, asking them to be quiet, and began his defense. **2**"King Agrippa," he said, "I think I'm a very fortunate man that a man like you is here today while I defend myself against all the things which the Jews are accusing me of doing. **3**I say this especially because you know so much about the way the Jews live and how they do things, and all the questions they argue about. Therefore I beg you to be patient as you listen to me.

5a"Since the Jews have known me for a long time, **4a**they all know what kind of a life I have lived, **4b**first going all the way back to the beginning in my own country, and then when I was a young man in Jerusalem. **5b**If they are willing to tell you what they know, they can tell you that from the very first I lived as a Pharisee,* and the Pharisees are the strictest group in our religion.

6"And right now I'm standing here on trial because of the hope I have in the promise God made to our forefathers. **7**And all of our twelve tribes worship and serve God day and night with all their hearts, hoping to obtain what God was talking about when He made that promise. And the things the Jews are accusing me of doing, Your Majesty, have to do with this hope. **8**Why do you people think it's impossible to believe that God can raise the dead back to life?

9"However I once thought I had to do all kinds of things to work against Jesus the Nazorite.* **10**And

that's exactly what I did in Jerusalem. I'm the one who locked up many of God's people* in jail, after I got the authority to do so from the head priests.* And when they were being killed, I voted for their death. ¹¹ I also went to all the meeting houses* many times and had them beaten, trying to force them to curse the name of Jesus. I was so insanely angry that I hunted them down like animals, even in foreign cities.

Paul Tells How He was Converted

¹²"Damascus was one of the cities I went to with the authority and power of the head priests. ¹³And one day around noon, your Majesty, as I was walking along the road to Damascus, I saw a light shining all around me and the other men who were travelling with me. It came right out of the sky, and it was much brighter than the sun.

¹⁴"And after we had all fallen down to the ground, I heard a voice talking to me in the Aramaic language.* 'Saul, Saul!' it said, 'why are you hunting me down like an animal? You're hurting yourself by acting like an ox or a horse that is kicking against those sharp pointed sticks which the driver uses to make them go.'

¹⁵"And so I asked, 'Who are you, sir?'

"And the Lord answered, 'I'm Jesus, the one you're hunting down like an animal. ¹⁶But now get up and stand on your feet! You see, this is why I have appeared to you. I'm appointing you to be my servant and witness, who will tell people about the things you have seen, and the things I'm going to show you. ¹⁷I'll keep you safe from the people of Israel, and also from the people of the other nations* to whom I'm going to send you. ¹⁸You will open their eyes, so that they will turn from darkness to the light, and from Satan's kingdom to God. And as their eyes are opened, their faith in me will also give them the forgiveness of sins and all the things God has set aside to give to those who are perfectly clean and holy.'*

19"And from that time on, King Agrippa, I haven't disobeyed that heavenly figure I saw that day. **20**First I went to the people in Damascus, and then the people in Jerusalem, and all through the district of Judea, and then to the people of the other nations. And I told them all that they must change their minds and their way of living and turn to God, and do the kind of things which show that they have made such a change. **21**And it's because of this that the Jews grabbed me in the Temple-yard and tried to kill me.

22"But because I obeyed, I have had the help that comes from God right up to this present time. And now I'm standing here telling everyone, both small and great, what I have seen and heard and know. And I am telling you just what Moses and the prophets said was going to happen - **23**that since the Messiah* had to suffer, and since He was the first one to come back to life again from the dead, He is going to tell the people of Israel and the people of the other nations about the Light".*

24Then while Paul was talking, Festus shouted at Him, "You're crazy, Paul! All the things you have read are driving you crazy."

25But Paul replied, "Your Honor, Festus, I'm not crazy. No indeed! I'm talking about things which are true and come from a healthy mind. **26**You see, the king understands these things; and when I talk to him, I speak boldly and clearly. In fact, I'm sure I haven't told him one thing he doesn't already know, for all this hasn't happened in some corner. **27**King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do."

28And Agrippa answered, "In this short time are you trying to make me a Christian?"

29Paul replied, "Even though it seems impossible, I pray to God that whether it takes a short time or a long time, not only you, but also all these people who are listening to me today would become just like me, except for these chains."

30Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the people who were sitting with them, got up. **31**And after they left the room, they spent some time talking among themselves. They were saying, "This man isn't doing anything for which he should be killed or put in prison."

32And Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he hadn't asked the Emperor to hear his case."

PAUL'S FOURTH TRIP*

Paul is Sent to Rome

September, 59

27 When the governor decided that we* should sail to Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to a Roman army captain named Julius, who was a member of the 'Emperor's Regiment'. **2**And we got on board a ship from Adramyttium that was going to sail to the cities along the coastline of Asia, and put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

3The next day we landed at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul in a very kind and friendly way by giving him permission to go to see his friends there in town, who could give him whatever he needed.

4From there we put out to sea and sailed along the south and west coasts of Cyprus, using the island as a shelter, because the winds were blowing against us. **5**Then we sailed across the open sea opposite the provinces of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and landed at Myra, in the province of Lycia.* **6**There the Roman captain found a ship from Alexandria that was sailing for Italy, and put us on board.

7For several days we sailed along very slowly, and had a hard time getting to where we could see Cnidus. And when the wind wouldn't let us go any farther west, we sailed past Cape Salmone and along the east and south coasts of Crete, using that island as a shelter. **8**It was hard to keep the ship close to the shore, but finally we landed at a place called Good Harbors, which

was close to a city called Lasea.

⁹We had now been gone for quite a long time, and now it was dangerous to continue our voyage, because the fall festival* was already over. So Paul gave them this advice - ¹⁰"My friends, I can see that if we sail any further there will be a lot of damage and loss, not only to the ship and its cargo, but also to ourselves."

¹¹But the army captain believed what the pilot and the captain said, rather than what Paul was saying. ¹²And since that harbor wasn't a good place to spend the winter, the majority decided to put out to sea again, hoping that they might be able to get to Phoenix and spend the winter there. Phoenix is a harbor in Crete which faces southwest and northwest.

The Storm

¹³So when the wind began to blow softly from the south, they thought they could make their plan work. And they pulled up the anchor and started to sail along the coast of Crete, keeping the ship as close to the shore as possible. ¹⁴But it wasn't very long before a hurricane (what the sailors call a 'northeaster') came roaring down from the land and hit us. ¹⁵Now the ship was at the mercy of the storm. And since we couldn't head it into the wind, we turned our backs to it and let it carry us along.

¹⁶But when we came to a little island named Cauda, we sailed along the south side, using the island as a shelter. And as we did so, we were just barely able to pull the lifeboat in close to the ship.* ¹⁷And when the crew had hauled it up on the deck, they "walked" some big ropes under the ship from either side, and tied the ends tightly together over the deck to hold the ship together. Now the sailors were afraid that we might run aground on the Syrtis sandbar, off the coast of Libya. So they lowered the sail and let the wind and the waves carry the ship along.

¹⁸And the next day we were being battered so badly by the storm that the crew began to throw the ship's

cargo overboard. ¹⁹And the day after that they threw out the ship's equipment. ²⁰After this we didn't see the sun or the stars for many days, and the terrible storm hung over us all the time. And finally we gave up all hope of being saved.

²¹During this time many of the people weren't eating any food. So Paul gathered them together and said to them, "My friends, you should have listened to me and not sailed away from Crete. Then we wouldn't have had all this damage and loss. ²²But now I'm urging you to cheer up, because not a single one of you is going to lose his life. The only thing that will be lost is the ship.

²³"You see, last night the God I belong to and serve sent one of his angels, who stood right beside me ²⁴and said, 'You mustn't be afraid, Paul. You must stand in front of the Emperor. And I want you to know that God will also bring all those who are sailing with you safely to Rome.'

²⁵"Therefore my friends, you must cheer up. You see, I believe in my God, and I believe that everything will happen just as He said. ²⁶But we have to run aground on some island."

²⁷On the fourteenth night we were in the Adriatic,* still being carried along by the wind. But in the middle of the night the sailors began to get the feeling that we were getting close to land. ²⁸So they dropped a line with a weight attached to it to measure the depth, and found that the water was 120 feet deep. A little while later they dropped the line again and found that it was 90 feet deep. ²⁹And now they were afraid that we might run aground on some rocky reef, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

³⁰But then the sailors tried to leave the ship. They had just let the lifeboat down into the water, saying that they were going to run out some anchors from the front of the ship, ³¹when Paul said to the army captain and the soldiers, "If these sailors don't stay

on board the ship, you men will never get to shore safely." **32**So the soldiers cut the ropes holding the lifeboat and let it drift away.

33And from then until the time when the sky was beginning to get light Paul kept on urging all the people to eat something. He said, "For the past fourteen days you have been expecting the worst, and constantly going without food. You haven't eaten a thing. **34**Therefore I'm urging you to eat something. After all, this is something you must do for your own health and safety. I've already told you that not one of you will lose as much as a hair from your heads."

35And when he finished talking, Paul took a little loaf of bread* and said a prayer of thanksgiving to God in front of them all. Then he broke off a piece and started to eat. **36**And now that they all felt a lot better, they also helped themselves to some food. **37**All together there were 276 of us on board the ship. **38**And after they had eaten all they could, they made the ship lighter by throwing out all the grain into the ocean.

The Shipwreck

39When it got light, the sailors didn't recognize the land at all. But they did see a kind of bay with a sandy beach, and they decided to run the ship up onto that beach if they could. **40**So they threw off the anchor ropes and let them drop into the water. And at the same time they untied the ropes that were holding the steering oars against the ship. Then they raised the small sail in the front part of the ship so that it would catch the breeze and headed for the beach.

41But soon they ran into a shallow place, and the ship ran onto a sandbar. The front part of the ship got stuck in the sand and wouldn't move at all, while the back part was being pounded to pieces by the force of the waves.

42The soldiers then decided to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would dive into the water and

escape.* **43**But since the army captain wanted to bring Paul safely through to Rome, he stopped them from carrying out their plan. He gave orders that all who could swim should jump off the ship first and swim ashore. **44**Then the rest should go, holding on to boards or anything else they could find on the ship. And by doing this, everyone got safely to land.

The Island of Malta

October, 59

28 When we were safely ashore, we learned that the island was called Malta. **2**And the natives who lived there were unusually kind and friendly to us. They made us all welcome and built a bonfire, because it was raining and cold.

3Paul had gathered quite a lot of dry sticks for the fire, and when he laid them on the fire, a poisonous snake crawled out of the sticks because of the heat and bit his hand. **4**When the natives saw the ugly thing hanging on Paul's hand, they said to each other, "No doubt about it. This man is a murderer. He escaped from the sea, but the goddess of Justice didn't let him live."

5But Paul just shook the snake off into the fire and nothing bad happened at all. **6**Of course the natives were waiting for Paul's arm to swell up, or for Paul to suddenly fall down dead. But after they waited for a long time and saw that nothing unusual was happening to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

7The head man of the island was named Publius, and he happened to own a lot of the land in that part of the island where we landed. So he took us to his home and treated us as his guests in a very friendly way for three days.

8Publius' father however was lying in bed, sick with a fever and dysentery; so Paul went into his room and prayed. Then he put his hands on him and made him well. **9**And when this happened, all the other people on the island who had anything wrong with

them came to Publius' house, and were given medical treatment.* **10**These people also thanked us with many gifts, and when we were getting ready to sail away, they put what we needed on the ship.

Paul Arrives in Rome

February, 60

11After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had spent the winter on the island. The ship was from Alexandria, and it was called "The Twin Sons of Zeus".* **12**We landed first at Syracuse, and stayed there for three days. **13**Then we pulled up our anchors and sailed into Rhegium. And after we spent one day there, the wind began to blow from the south, and two days later we arrived in Puteoli. **14**There we found some brothers who begged us to stay with them for a week. And from there we started out for Rome.

15But when the brothers and sisters in Rome heard that we were coming, they came out to meet us, all the way to the Appian Market* and the Three Taverns.* And when Paul saw them, he said a prayer of thanksgiving to God and was filled with new courage. **16**And when we arrived in Rome, Paul was allowed to live in his own house, with a soldier guarding him.

Paul Spends Two Years in Rome

60-62

17On the third day after he arrived in Rome, Paul called the men who were the Jewish leaders together. And when they were all there, Paul said to them, "My dear friends and brothers, I'm a man who has done nothing to hurt our people, nor anything that is opposed to the ways our forefathers taught us to do things. But in spite of this I have come here as a prisoner from Jerusalem, where I was handed over to the Romans. **18**And the Romans questioned me and wanted to set me free, because I hadn't done a single thing that would be a reason to kill me. **19**But when the Jews objected, I was forced to ask the Emperor to hear my case. But it wasn't because I'm accusing my own people of doing anything wrong. **20**This is why I have asked to see you and talk to you. You see, it's because of Israel's

hope* that I'm wearing this chain."

21And the elders answered, "We haven't received any letters from Judea about you, and none of our brothers have come here to Rome and given us any report or said anything bad about you. **22**But we think it would be the right thing to hear you tell us about your ideas. You see, we know that people everywhere are talking against this group".*

23Then they made an appointment with Paul to meet on a certain day. And that day a lot more of them came to see him at the place where Paul was staying. And from sunrise to sunset Paul laid it all out for them, telling them what he knew about God's Kingdom, and trying to persuade them from the Law of Moses and the prophets that Jesus is the Messiah.

24And some of them believed what he said, and some didn't. **25**So when they left the meeting, they were all disagreed among themselves.

But before they left, Paul's last words were, "The Holy Spirit was certainly right when He spoke to your forefathers through the prophet Isaiah **26**and said,

'Go to this group of people and tell them,
"You will strain your ears to listen, but you will
never understand anything;
and you will strain your eyes to look, but you
will never see anything."

27 Because these people's minds have become so
lazy that they can't think at all.

They can hardly hear with their ears,
and they have shut their eyes,
because they don't want to see anything with
their eyes,

or hear anything with their ears,
or understand anything with their minds
and turn to Me,
so that I will heal them'.⁺

28"Therefore I want you to know that God has sent the news about this salvation of His to the people of the other nations,* and they will listen to it."

30So Paul stayed there in his own rented home for two whole years, and he gave all those who came to see him a warm welcome. **31**And he kept on spreading the news about God's Kingdom, and explaining what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus Christ in the plainest and clearest way possible, and nobody stopped him.

(Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians)*

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

(Written from Corinth in late 56 or early 57 A.D.)*

1 ^{1a}This letter is from Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, who called me to serve as an apostle.*

⁷And I'm writing to all of you living in Rome whom God loves and has called to be His people.*

God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.*

Paul Introduces Himself and His Work

^{1b}I have been chosen to spread God's Good News, ²which tells about things God promised a long time ago, when He spoke through His prophets in the holy Bible.* ^{3a}This Good News is about His Son, ^{4b}Jesus Christ our Lord, ^{3b}who came into the world as a member of David's family,* if we're talking about His human body. ^{4a}But if we're talking about His pure and sinless spirit, He was shown to be God's Son in a powerful way when He came back to life again after He died. ⁵He is the one who has brought us God's undeserved love and appointed us to be apostles who are sent out to speak for Him to the people of all the other nations,* so that they will believe in Him and obey Him. ⁶And you people are also among those foreigners whom Jesus Christ has called to be His people.

Some Personal Comments and Information

⁸First I want to say that I'm always thanking my God through Jesus Christ for all of you people, because other people all over the world are talking about your faith. ⁹You see, I'm serving God with all my heart by spreading the Good News about His Son. God could tell you that I never fail to remember you ¹⁰in my prayers. And I'm always asking Him if now, perhaps, He would at last be willing to find some way for me

*Helpful notes for Romans begin on page 811

to come to Rome. ¹¹For I'm very anxious to see you, so that I can bring you some spiritual gift which will make you stronger. ¹²But what I really want is that when I'm there with you, both you and I will be helped and encouraged, each one by the other's faith.

¹³I really want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have made plans many times to come and see you, but up until now something has always stopped me from coming. I want to come so that I can gather in some fruit among you people also, just as I have done among the other nations. ¹⁴For I have a debt to pay to the Greeks and the people of the other nations, the educated and those who can't ever be educated. ¹⁵And this is why I'm so eager to bring the Good News also to you people who are living in Rome.

The One All-important Thing for Everyone

¹⁶You see, I'm not ashamed of the Good News, because it is God's power which will save every person who believes it, whether he's a Jew, to whom God first sent this message, or a Greek. ¹⁷And this Good News saves us because it shows us God's way of becoming perfectly holy in His sight,* and that way is by faith from beginning to end, just as the Bible says - "The one who will live is the one whom God has accepted as perfectly holy because of his faith".[†]

The Sinfulness of Fallen Man

¹⁸You see, God is always letting us know from heaven how angry He is about all the godless and sinful things that are done by people who by their sinfulness are trying to keep the truth from being known. ¹⁹And this one thing that people can learn about God is perfectly clear, because God has made it clear to them. ²⁰For ever since the creation of the world, people can understand some things about God that can't be seen with our eyes. For example, by looking at the things God has made, people can see God's power and

[†]Verses quoted in Romans are on page 877

the fact that He is God. So people have no excuse at all, ²¹because they really do have some knowledge of God. But they haven't given Him the honor and glory He deserves, and they haven't thanked Him either. Instead, they have made fools of themselves by the things they have been thinking, and their stupid minds have become filled with darkness. ²²While they claim to be wise, they have become fools. ²³And they have turned the shining heavenly beauty of God, who cannot die, into a statue that looks like some dying man, or statues of birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴Therefore God has let them follow the sinful desires of their hearts, which lead them to do filthy things, so that they do the most shameful things to their bodies among themselves. ²⁵People like this have turned God's truth into a lie, and they fear and worship what has been created instead of the Creator, who should be praised and worshiped forever. Yes, He certainly should be! ²⁶And therefore God has let them be ruled by their shameful passions. Their women have turned the natural use of their bodies into something which is contrary to nature. ²⁷And their men have also done the same thing. They have given up the natural use of the female and are all on fire by their desire for each other. The result is that men do the most shameful things with other men, and bring on themselves the punishment which is necessary for their sin.*

²⁸And since they don't think it's worthwhile to have any true knowledge about God, He has let them go to the point where their minds are so confused that they keep on doing things which should never be done. ²⁹And their hearts and lives are filled with all kinds of wrongdoing, wickedness, greed and evil, with envy, murder, quarreling, cheating and meanness. They gossip ³⁰and say nasty things about others; and they hate God. They're proud and conceited people who are always bragging about themselves and finding new ways to do evil. They disobey their parents, ³¹and are senseless, stupid people who never keep their promises, since they have no love or pity for others.

32They're the kind of people who know very well God's basic rule of right and wrong, that those who do such sinful things deserve to be put to death. And yet they not only go on doing these things, but they also encourage others who are doing them.

God's Righteous Judgment Falls on All Sinners

2 Therefore my friend, if you are judging someone else, you have absolutely no excuse or defense for what you're doing, no matter who you are. For in every case where you're judging the other person, you're condemning yourself, since you who are doing the judging are doing the very same things. **2** And we know that the judgment God passes on people who do such things is correct. **3** So my friends, do you think you're going to escape God's judgment when you're judging those who do such things while you're doing the same things yourself?

4 Doesn't God's great kindness mean anything to you, or the fact that He has put up with you so patiently for such a long time? Don't you know that it's God's kindness that is always trying to lead you to change your mind and your way of living? **5** But because your heart is so hard that you will not change your mind or your way of living, you're storing up a lot of God's holy anger for yourself on that awful Day* when everyone will see how right God's judgments are. **6** For then He will give every person exactly what he or she has coming for what each has done.

7 Some people, who are patiently trying to keep on doing good things, are looking for glory and honor and freedom from all sin and corruption. And God will give these people eternal Life on that Day. **8** But there are others who are driven by selfish ambition and will not believe the truth. Instead, they follow that which is wrong, and God's holy and destructive anger will fall on these people on that Day. **9** Yes, suffering and misery will come to every human being who does what is bad, whether that person is a Jew or a Greek. And God's

judgment will begin with the Jews. ¹⁰But there will be glory, honor and peace for every person who does what is good, whether that person is a Jew or a Greek. And again it will start with the Jews. ¹¹You see, God doesn't have any favorites.

¹²For example, there are many people who have sinned, even though they don't have the Law. And God will sentence them to eternal destruction without ever looking at the Law. But all those who live under the Law and have sinned will be judged by the Law. ¹³After all, it isn't the people who hear what the Law says who are perfectly holy in God's sight. It's the people who do what the Law says who will be perfectly holy in His sight.*

¹⁴For example, the people of the other nations don't have the Law. But when they do by nature what the Law requires, these people who don't have the Law are their own law, ^{15a}since their lives show that their law has been at work in their hearts. ^{16a}And on the last Day when they appear before Christ Jesus, God's appointed Judge, ^{15b}their conscience will be their witness. ^{16b}For when Jesus judges all the things men and women have kept secret, ^{15c}each one's thoughts will sometimes accuse them of having done wrong, and at other times they will defend their actions as being right. ^{16c}This is what I tell people when I bring them the Good News.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷So if you call yourself a Jew, and build your hopes on the Law, and brag about your God, I have something to say to you. ¹⁸As a Jew you know what God wants and you have learned from the Law to choose the right things. ¹⁹And you're sure that you are a guide for the blind, and a light for those who are living in darkness, ²⁰and that you can train fools and teach little children, because you have the whole book of knowledge and truth in the Bible.

²¹Since you're teaching the other person therefore,

aren't you teaching yourself? You're telling people not to steal, but are you stealing? ²²You're telling them not to be partners in any sexual sins, but are you being partners in sexual sins? You think idols are filthy and disgusting things, but are you robbing their temples? ²³You're bragging about the Law, but are you dishonoring God by the way you break the Law? ²⁴It's true that the Bible says, "The people of the other nations are saying insulting things about God because of you Jews".*

²⁵You see, being circumcised* is worth something if you keep the Law. But if you're a lawbreaker, you're just like the person who has never been circumcised.

²⁶Therefore if the people who aren't circumcised keep the commandments of the Law, won't God treat them as though they were circumcised? ²⁷And so the person who isn't circumcised and keeps the Law will condemn you, since what is written in the Law and your own circumcision have made you a lawbreaker.

²⁸You see, being a Jew has nothing to do with one's outward appearance and behavior. And being circumcised isn't a physical operation that is done to one's body. ²⁹No, being a Jew* has to do with one's inner condition, and being circumcised is something that is done to the heart.* And it's brought about by the Spirit, and not by the writings of the Law. And the person who has been truly circumcised receives his praise from God, not from other people.

³ And so, what's the advantage of being a Jew? Or what's the value of being circumcised? ²It's worth a great deal in every way. First, because God has given the Jews His written messages to use and pass along to others.

³So what if some of the Jews were unfaithful? Their unfaithfulness certainly won't destroy God's faithfulness, will it? ⁴That's impossible! No, God must be true, while every human being is a liar, as the Bible says:

"so that everyone will know that You are right
when You speak,

and You will always have Your way
when You're judging".⁺

⁵But if our wrongdoing shows how right and fair and perfect God is, what are we going to say? Certainly not that God is unfair when He brings down His holy anger on the sinner! That's the way people talk. ⁶But such a thing is impossible! For if God isn't fair, how is He going to judge the world?

⁷"But if my lie has brought God glory and honor by making His truth shine more brightly, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?" ⁸Yes, why not say, "Let's keep on doing evil things, so that good things will happen?" That's what some people are accusing us of saying, and it's just one of the false and insulting things they're saying about us. People like this deserve to be punished.

All Human Beings are Sinners. Condemned to Death

⁹Well then, are we Jews worse off than other people? No indeed! After all, we have already accused everyone, both Jews and Greeks, of being under the power of sin,* ¹⁰just as the Bible says -

"There is no one who is perfectly holy in God's sight,*
not a single one.

¹¹ There is no one who understands,
no one who is searching for God.

¹² They have all turned away from Him.
They're all worthless creatures.

There is no one who does anything good,
not a single one."^{*}

¹³ "Their throats are open graves;
they use their tongues to trick others into
believing things that aren't true".^{*}

"The poison of snakes* is inside their lips;"⁺

¹⁴ "their mouths are full of cursing and angry words".⁺

¹⁵ "They are eager to kill;

¹⁶ and they leave destruction and misery
wherever they go.

¹⁷ They know nothing about the road of peace;"⁺

¹⁸ "and there is no fear of God in their hearts".⁺

19We also know that whatever the Law* says was written for those people who are living under the Law, so that no one will be able to say a single word in his own defense, and the whole world will come under God's judgment. **20**You see,"No person will ever be perfectly holy* in God's sight + because of what he has done in an effort to keep the Law. The truth is that the Law makes us realize how sinful we are.

God's Way of Becoming Perfectly Holy

21But now we have God's way of becoming perfectly holy plainly set before us. And it has nothing to do with any kind of law, even though the Law and the Prophets* both speak about it. **22**Instead, we see that we become perfectly holy in God's sight when we believe in Jesus Christ, and this includes everyone who believes, for there isn't any difference in people.

23You see, all men and women have sinned, and none of them has God's kind of perfect holiness. **24**But God says that they are all perfectly holy in His sight because Christ Jesus has paid their ransom price* and set them all free. And it's all a free gift that comes to us by God's undeserved love!

25aYes, God has placed Jesus before our eyes as the One who covers over all sins,* so that we become perfectly holy in God's sight* when we put our trust in Jesus' blood. And God did this to prove that He is a perfect judge who always does what is right and fair, **26a**because in His patience **25b**He had apparently overlooked the sins which had been committed in the past. **26b**But now He has shown us very clearly what being perfectly holy means. For He has shown us that He is perfectly holy, always doing what is right and fair, and also that He accepts the person who believes in Jesus as perfectly holy.

27What happens then to our boasting? It's shut out completely. But what kind of teaching* is it that shuts it out? Is it the teaching that we're saved by what we do? Of course not. It's the teaching that we're saved by faith. **28**Because we believe that God

accepts a person as perfectly holy in His sight by his faith, without ever looking at the things he has done in an effort to keep the Law.

29 But is God the God of the Jews only? * Isn't He also the God of the other nations? * Of course He's the God of the other nations. **30** And since there's only one God, He will accept the person who is circumcised as perfectly holy because of his faith, and He will also accept the person who isn't circumcised as perfectly holy by that same faith.

31 But then are we saying that our faith has done away with the Law? That's unthinkable! No, we're saying that the Law is still in force.

Abraham, the Great Example of Faith

4 But now what shall we say about Abraham, who was the first father of our nation? What answer did he find? **2** After all, if God accepted Abraham as perfectly holy because of the things he had done, he had something to boast about. But not in God's sight. **3** For what does the Bible say? "And Abraham believed God, and God gave him credit for being perfectly holy by bringing him to faith".⁺

4 When a person works, his wages aren't thought of as a gift, but as a debt that must be paid. **5** But a person doesn't work to earn salvation. He puts his trust in the One who accepts the godless person as perfectly holy, and God gives him credit for being perfectly holy when He brings him to faith.

6 David also says the same thing when he speaks about how happy a person is when God gives him credit for being perfectly holy without ever looking at the things he has done. He says,

7 "The truly happy people
are those whose wicked deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered over.

8 A person is truly happy
when the Lord has no record of his sins".⁺

9 But does this happiness come only to the person

who is circumcised, or does it also come to the person who isn't circumcised? You see, we're saying that "God gave Abraham credit for being perfectly holy when He brought him to faith." ¹⁰But what about Abraham when this happened? Was he circumcised or not? And the answer is that Abraham was not circumcised at that time. ¹¹And when he was circumcised later, this was a special sign or mark, like a seal or guarantee,* that God had accepted him as perfectly holy because of the faith he had in his heart before he was circumcised. And all this happened so that Abraham would be the father of all the uncircumcised people who are believers, and God would give them credit for being perfectly holy, ¹²just as Abraham is also the father of those who are circumcised. But not all the people who are circumcised are Abraham's children. It's only those who also follow in the footsteps of our father Abraham by having the same faith he had before he was circumcised.

God's Promise to Abraham Demanded Real Faith

¹³You see, God promised Abraham and his family that people all over the world would belong to their family.* And this promise wasn't made to them because they had kept the Law, but because Abraham and his family are perfectly holy in God's sight by faith. ¹⁴You see, if people become heirs* because they keep the Law, then faith is just an empty word, and God's promise means nothing. ¹⁵So the truth is that the Law brings God's holy anger down upon us. And where there isn't any law, there isn't any lawbreaking either.

¹⁶And there's a reason why the things God has set aside to give to His children come to a person by his faith. It's so that it will be a gift of God's undeserved love, and God's promise will be something every member of Abraham's family can depend on, not only the one who is a member of Abraham's family through the Law, but also the one who shares Abraham's faith.

And so we can all say that Abraham is our father, ¹⁷just as the Bible says - "I have made you the father

of many nations".⁺ And the God Abraham believed in is the God who brings the dead back to life, and calls things into being out of nothing.*

18So Abraham believed that he would be "the father of many nations," just as God said - "That's how large your family will be".⁺ And Abraham's heart was filled with hope, even though there was no human hope that such a thing would ever happen, **19**because he was almost a hundred years old, and he knew very well that his own body was already dead, and that Sarah had never been able to have any children. But his faith wasn't weak, **20**and there was no unbelief in his heart which made him doubt God's promise. Instead, he gave glory and honor to God, and his faith made him strong, **21**and he was absolutely sure that God was able to do whatever He had promised. **22**And that's why "God gave him credit for being perfectly holy because of his faith".⁺

23But the words, "God gave him credit . . ." weren't written only about Abraham. **24**No, they were also written about us, for whom God was going to do the same thing, since we believe in the One who raised our Lord Jesus back to Life from the dead. **25**And He's the same Jesus who was handed over to die because of our sins, and was raised back to Life again to make us perfectly holy in God's sight.

Now that We are Perfectly Holy . . .

5 And now that God has accepted us as perfectly holy by bringing us to faith, we are at peace* with God, because of what our Lord Jesus Christ did. **2**And He has also made it possible for us to draw near by faith and enjoy the blessings of God's undeserved love, as we are now doing. And we're also boasting about the hope we have of sharing God's glory and honor.

3But that isn't all. We can also boast about our troubles, because we know that trouble fills us with the ability to hold on patiently, **4**and the ability to hold on patiently gives us a character which will pass

the test, and a character which will pass the test gives us hope. ⁵And we'll never be ashamed of this hope, because God has given us His Holy Spirit who is always telling us about God's love for us.

⁶You see, Christ died for us godless people at the time God had set, while we were still weak and helpless.

⁷It might be possible that someone would die for a person who always does what is right. Because there probably would be someone who would have the courage to die for a good person. ⁸But God is always showing us His love for us by telling us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners!

⁹And now that God has accepted us as perfectly holy because Jesus poured out His blood for us, we can be much more certain that Jesus will save us from God's holy anger. ¹⁰After all, we were God's enemies when He made us His friends through the death of His Son. So now that He has made us His friends, we can be much more sure that we will be saved by Jesus' life. ¹¹But that isn't all. We can even boast about what God has done through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made us what we are now - God's friends.

Adam and Jesus

¹²You see, sin came into the world through one man, and death came into the world through sin. And because everyone has sinned, death has spread so that it comes to all human beings. ¹³Of course there was sin in the world before God gave the Law, but when there isn't any law, there isn't any sin charged to anyone's account. ¹⁴But death ruled the world during the whole time from Adam to Moses, and it came also to those who hadn't sinned in the same way Adam did, by disobeying God's commandment.

And Adam was also a picture of the One who was going to come, ¹⁵even though God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. You see, all human beings died because of that one man's sin. But God's undeserved love and His free gift overflowed to all human beings in a much

greater way because of the undeserved love of that one Man, Jesus Christ.

16 And that gift is really the opposite of what happened because of that one man's sin. You see, God's judgment came as the result of one sin, and it condemned all people to eternal death. But God's free gift came as the result of many sins, and it made all people perfectly holy in God's sight.

17 Of course it's true that death rules the world because of that one man's sin. But there's something much greater for those who receive God's overflowing, undeserved love and His freely given statement that they are perfectly holy in God's sight. They will rule the world in the new Life because of that one Man, Jesus Christ. **18** And this means that just as all human beings were condemned to eternal death because of the sin of one man, so it was also through the perfect act of one Man that all human beings were accepted as perfectly holy and given eternal Life. **19** In other words, just as all human beings were made sinners by the disobedience of one man, so also all human beings will be made perfectly holy by the obedience of one Man.

20 And the Law was added to show how much sin there is. But where there was much sin, there was a much greater outpouring of God's undeserved love. **21** And the result is that just as sin has ruled the world by the power of death, so also God's undeserved love will rule the world by making people perfectly holy and giving them eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We Can't Go on Living in Sin Any Longer

6 "Well then, let's keep on living in sin, so that we will have plenty of God's undeserved love." Is that what we're going to say? **2** No! We would never say that. We're the kind of people who have died to sin. How can we go on living in it? **3** Don't you know that all of us who were united with Christ Jesus by baptism have died with Him? **4** Yes, by our baptism we died

and were buried with Christ, so that now we can live a new life, just as He was raised back to Life from the dead by His Father's glorious power.*

⁵After all, since we were united with Him by dying as He did, we shall also be united with Him by coming back to Life again as He did. ⁶For we know that our old sinful self was put on that cross with Christ, so that our sinful body will be destroyed and we shall no longer be slaves of sin, ⁷because the person who dies is free from sin. ⁸And since we died with Christ, we believe that we're also going to live with Him. ⁹For we know that since Christ was raised back to Life from the dead, He will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. ¹⁰And therefore when we say, "He died," we mean that He died just once for all sin. But when we say, "He's living," we mean that He's living for God. ¹¹And so you people must also think of yourselves as being dead to sin, but living for God, since you are united with Christ Jesus.

¹²Therefore sin must not be allowed to control your dying body, so that you obey its sinful desires. ¹³And you mustn't allow sin to use the members of your bodies as tools to do things that are wrong. Instead, you must give yourselves to God as people who are alive from the dead. And you must let God use the members of your bodies as tools to do what He says is right. ¹⁴After all, sin mustn't be your master, because you're not living under the Law, but under God's undeserved love.

We are God's Slaves

¹⁵"Well then, let's go right on sinning, since we aren't living under the Law, but under God's undeserved love." Is that what we're going to say? No! We could never say that. ¹⁶Don't you know that when you offer yourselves as slaves to some person and promise to obey him, you really are slaves of that person you're obeying? And you must either be slaves of sin, which will bring about your death, or obedient

slaves of God, who will make you perfectly holy.

17You people used to be slaves of sin. But we thank God that you have obeyed with all your heart the things you have been taught. **18**And so now that you have been set free from sin, you have become slaves who must do what God says is right.

19I'm going to use ordinary, everyday language here, because your sinful mind and body is so weak.* You see, you used to let the members of your bodies be used as slaves of uncleanness and lawlessness to do lawless things. So now you must let the members of your bodies be used as slaves of right living to do holy things. **20**After all, when you were slaves of sin, you didn't have to do anything God says is right. **21**But what were the results at that time of doing those things you're ashamed of now? Of course the final result of those things is death. **22**But now that you have been set free from sin and have become God's slaves, the results you're getting are holy lives, and the final result is eternal Life. **23**You see, the wages of sin is death, but God's free gift is eternal Life united with Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Example of a Married Woman

7 My brothers and sisters, I know that I'm talking to people who have some knowledge of law. And therefore you certainly know that a person is bound by any law only as long as he's alive. **2**For example, the law binds a married woman to her husband as long as he's alive. But if her husband dies, she's free from that law that bound her to her husband. **3**And this means that if she lives with another man while her husband is alive, she will be called an unfaithful wife. But if her husband dies, she's free from that law, so that she won't be called unfaithful if she lives with another man.

4And so my brothers and sisters, because you're a part of Christ's body, you have also died so far as the Law is concerned, so that you can belong to another Man. And this Man was raised back to Life from the

dead, so that we can bring forth the kind of fruit that is pleasing to God. ⁵You see, when we were in our natural sinful condition, our sinful desires were stirred to action by the Law. And they worked in the members of our bodies to produce the kind of fruit that brings death. ⁶But now that we have been killed by the Law which bound us, we have been set free from the Law, so that we can serve as slaves in the Spirit's new way of living, and not in the written Law's old way.

Our Problem is Our Old Sinful Body

⁷"Well then, the Law is something sinful." Is that what we're going to say? No, we could never say that. But I never would have known what sin is if the Law hadn't taught me. For example, I would never know what a sinful desire is if the Law hadn't said, "You must not have any sinful desires".⁺ ⁸And so the commandment gave sin its chance, and it stirred up all kinds of sinful desires in my heart. You see, sin is a dead thing when there isn't any law.

⁹And talking about myself, there was a time when I was living without any law. But when the commandment came, sin came to life, ¹⁰and I died. And so I have learned that the commandment which was given to bring Life actually brings death. ¹¹In other words, the commandment gave sin its chance, and it completely fooled me and used the commandment to kill me. ¹²And so we must say that the Law is holy, and each commandment is holy and right and good.

¹³"Well then, did this good thing kill me?" No, that could never happen. It was sin that killed me by using that good thing. And by using God's commandment in that way, everyone can see how terribly sinful sin is.

¹⁴You see, we know that the Law is a spiritual thing; but I am a sinful creature, sold to be a slave of sin.

¹⁵The fact is that I really don't understand what I'm doing. You see, I'm not doing what I want to do. Instead, I'm doing what I hate. ¹⁶But since I'm doing what I don't want to do, I agree that the Law is good.

17And the truth is that it isn't I who am doing this any longer, but it's the sin which is living in me.

18You see, I know there isn't any good thing living in me, that is, in my sinful mind and body.* Because even though I want to do the right thing, I'm not able to do it. **19**So as I said, I'm not doing the good things I want to do. Instead, I'm doing the bad things I don't want to do. **20**But since I'm doing what I don't want to do, it isn't I who am doing this any longer, but it's the sin which is living in me.*

21And so I'm always learning that whenever I want to do the right thing, by some unchanging law it's always the bad thing that is right there waiting to be done. **22**You see, my heart and mind want to do just what God's Law says. **23**But I see a different kind of law in the members of my body, and it's always fighting against the Law my heart and mind wants to follow. And this sinful law in the members of my body always takes me captive and makes me its slave. **24**What an unhappy person I am! Who will rescue me from this dying body?* **25**And I must thank my God, who has done so through Jesus Christ our Lord! And so this means that I'm serving God's Law with my heart and mind, but with my sinful mind and body I'm serving sin's law.

The Believer's Life is Controlled by the Spirit

8 Now therefore there is no sentence of eternal death hanging over those people who are in Christ Jesus,* **2**because the Spirit's law of Life through Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

3You see, the Law isn't strong enough to help us because our sinful mind and body* is so weak. But God found a way to help us when He sent His own Son with a body that was like our sinful bodies to be a sin-offering. And by doing this He announced that the sin in our sinful mind and body must be destroyed, **4**so that we can fully satisfy every requirement of His Law. And if the Spirit, and not our sinful mind and body, controls our lives, we can do so. **5**After

all, those whose lives are controlled by their sinful mind and body think about the things their sinful mind and body wants. But those whose lives are controlled by the Spirit think about the things the Spirit wants.

⁶The kind of thinking our sinful mind and body does brings death. But the kind of thinking the Spirit does brings Life and peace. ⁷And the reason for this is that our sinful mind and body thinks of God as our enemy, because it does not and cannot obey God's Law. ⁸And so those people whose lives are controlled by their sinful mind and body can't possibly please God.

⁹Your lives however aren't controlled by your sinful mind and body, but by the Spirit, because God's Spirit is living in you. But the person who doesn't have Christ's Spirit can't possibly belong to Christ. ¹⁰But since Christ is living in you, your body is dead* because of sin, but your spirit is alive because God has accepted you as perfectly holy in His sight. ¹¹We know that God raised Jesus back to Life from the dead. And since God's Spirit is living in you, He who raised Christ back to Life from the dead will also fill your dying bodies with new Life through that same Spirit who is living in you.

¹²And so my brothers and sisters, we have a debt to pay, but it isn't to our sinful mind and body. That is, we don't have to live the way it wants to live. ¹³After all, if you live the way your sinful mind and body want to live, you're going to die. But if you let the Spirit give you the power to put an end to the things your body likes to do, you will live.

¹⁴You see, all those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. ¹⁵For you weren't given a spirit who makes you slaves again, so that you should be afraid. No indeed. You were given a Spirit who makes you adopted children, and with His help we cry out and say, "Abba", which means "our Father". ¹⁶And the Spirit Himself makes us sure that what our own spirit tells us is the truth - that we are God's children.

17And since we are children, we're also heirs, who are going to receive whatever our Father has set aside to give us. Yes, we are God's heirs and we're going to receive from our Father all the things Christ has received. And since we're sharing Christ's sufferings, we must also share His glory and honor.

We Can be Sure of Our Final Salvation

18You see, I think the things we're suffering now can't be compared at all with the glory and honor God is going to give us. **19**After all, everything God has created is eagerly waiting for Him to let the world know who His children are. **20**You see, the whole creation has been turned into a place where nothing has any real or lasting value.* Of course it wasn't the creation which decided that things should be this way. It was God who decided that. But there was this hope, **21**that the creation would also be set free from its slavery that brings decay and destruction to enjoy the glorious freedom that belongs to God's children. **22**For we know that up till now all created things have been moaning and groaning in pain, like a woman giving birth to a child. **23**And it isn't only the created things, for even we who have the Spirit as the guarantee of all our future blessings are also moaning and groaning inwardly as we wait for the time when God will receive us into His presence as His adopted children, and our bodies will^s be set free from all sin.

24After all, we were saved by hope.* But a hope that we see isn't really a hope at all. And, who hopes for something he sees? **25**But since we're hoping for something we don't see, we're waiting for it patiently.

26And the Spirit also joins in and helps us in our weakness. You see, we don't know what we ought to pray for. But the Spirit himself prays for us, making sounds that can't be put into human words. **27**But the One who searches our hearts knows what the Spirit is thinking, because He speaks for God's people* in God's own way.

28And so we know that all things are always working together towards some good purpose for those people who love God, since they are the people God has called according to His plan. **29**You see God chose those people long before He called them. And He decided in eternity that they should be just like His Son, so that He would be the first among many brothers and sisters. **30**And then God called those people whom He had decided upon in eternity; and when He called them, He accepted them as perfectly holy in His sight. And when He accepted them as perfectly holy, He gave them His own glory and honor.

31So when we think about all this, what else can we say except this - "Since God is for us, what difference does it make who is against us?" **32**God didn't hold back even when it came to giving His own Son. Instead, He handed Him over to die for all of us. And since He has given us His Son, we know for sure that He's going to give us everything else as well.

33And who is going to accuse God's chosen people of doing wrong, when God is the one who has accepted them as perfectly holy? **34**Or who is going to condemn us when Christ, who died and then was raised back to Life again, is sitting there at God's right hand praying for us?

35And who is going to separate us from Christ's love? Will it be sufferings or troubles or the terrible things people do to us, or famine or the lack of clothes or war? **36**As the Bible says -

"For Your sake we're being killed the whole day long.

People think of us as sheep to be slaughtered".⁺

37But the truth is that in the midst of all these things we're winning an overwhelming victory with the help of the One who loves us. **38**In fact, I'm absolutely sure that nothing will ever be able to separate us from God's love, neither death nor life, nor angels, nor earthly rulers and authorities, nothing in the present or the future, no powers of any kind, **39**either in the world above, or the world below, or any other world. Nothing

will ever be able to separate us from God's love which Christ Jesus our Lord brought to us!

God and His Chosen People

9 As one who is in Christ,* I'm telling the truth. And by the power of the Holy Spirit my conscience tells me that I'm not lying **2**when I say that there's always a great sadness and continuous pain in my heart. **3**You see, I have prayed many times for my brothers and sisters who are my fellow countrymen, humanly speaking, asking that I might be the one who is separated from Christ and under God's curse to be destroyed. **4**Because my brothers and sisters are Israelites whom God adopted as His own children, giving them His glory and honor. He also gave them the agreements,* the Law, the way to worship, and the promises. **5**They are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and the Messiah* came from their nation, if we're talking about His human body. And He is the God who rules over all things and should be praised and worshiped forever. Yes, He certainly should be!

6It isn't possible that God's Word has failed. But you see, not all those who are descended from Israel are God's people;* **7**nor are all of them Abraham's children because they are members of his family. Instead, God said to Abraham, "The family I have promised you will come through Isaac".⁺ **8**This means that it isn't children who are born in the natural way who are God's children,* but it's children who are born as the result of God's promise who are counted as His family.* **9**You see, this is the way the promise to Abraham was worded - "I will come at the appointed time, and Sarah will have a son".⁺

10But this wasn't the whole story. Rebecca and our forefather Isaac had twins. **11a**And the truth is that before the children were born and had done anything, either good or bad, **12b**God said to Rebecca, "The older one will serve the younger one".⁺ **11b**And God said this so that His plan would always be based on His own choice, **12a**always depending on the one

who calls us, and not on what any person does. ¹³And that's exactly what the Bible says -

"I loved Jacob,
but I hated Esau".⁺

¹⁴So what are we going to say? We can't say that God is unfair, can we? That's unthinkable! ¹⁵After all, God said to Moses,

"I'll show mercy to anyone I choose,
and I'll have pity on anyone I wish".⁺

¹⁶And this means that everything depends on our merciful God, and not on what any person wants or is trying to do.

¹⁷For example, in the Bible God said to the king of Egypt, "I have raised you up for this very purpose, so that I can use you to show My power and make myself known all over the earth".⁺ ¹⁸And this means that God shows mercy to anyone He wishes, and He hardens the heart of anyone He wishes.

¹⁹So now you will say to me, "Well then, why does God keep on blaming us for what we do? After all, who can fight against God and what He wants?"

²⁰But my friend, you must also think of this. Who are you to be talking back to God? When a man makes something, that thing certainly isn't going to say to him, "Why have you made me like this?"* ²¹Doesn't the potter have the right to use his clay so as to make one part of the lump into a pot to be used for special occasions, and another part into a pot for everyday use?

²²And it's also true that while God wanted to show His holy anger and make His power known,* He was very patient in dealing with those people He was angry with, even though they had been created to be destroyed. ²³And by doing this, God was also thinking about those people on whom He would have mercy, those whom He had prepared from eternity to receive His divine glory and honor. He wanted to show them what a wonderful and glorious God He is.

²⁴And we are those people whom God has called,

not only from the Jews, but also from the other nations,*
 25 just as He says in the book of Hosea -

"Those who are not My people
 I will call 'My people';
 and she who is not My loved one
 I will call 'My loved one'."†

26 "And in that same place where they were told,
 'You are not My people,'
 they will be called 'children of the living God'."†

27 Isaiah also calls out, speaking about Israel, "If the children of Israel should be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore, only a small part of them will be saved. 28 For when the Lord cuts short the time and brings things to an end, He will hold a final accounting on the earth".† 29 And that's exactly what Isaiah had said before -

"If the Lord, the Commander of the armies of heaven,
 had not left us a few of our people to carry on,
 we would have become like Sodom.

Yes, we would have been like Gomorrah".†

30 So we must say that the people of the other nations, who weren't trying to be perfectly holy in God's sight,* have been accepted as perfectly holy. And it's their faith which has made them perfectly holy. 31 But the people of Israel, who were trying to find a law to make themselves perfectly holy, never found that law. 32 And why not? Because they don't realize that faith makes them perfectly holy. They think it comes by doing things. 33 And so they have tripped on the stone that makes men stumble, just as the Bible says,

"Listen carefully!

I'm placing in Zion a stone that will make
 men stumble,

and a rock that will make them fall.

But the person who believes in Him will never
 be disappointed".†

10 And so my brothers and sisters, the one thing that would make me happy is knowing that the people

of Israel were saved. And I'm always praying to God for them, that this will happen. ²After all, I can say this for them, that they have an intense love for God, but it isn't based on any full knowledge. ³You see, they don't know anything about God's way of becoming perfectly holy. And all the while they have been trying to set up their own way, they have refused to follow God's way of becoming perfectly holy. ⁴For the truth is that Christ has fulfilled the Law, so that every one who believes in Him becomes perfectly holy in God's sight.

Salvation is for All

⁵Moses wrote about how the Law makes people perfectly holy when he said, "The person who keeps the commandments of the Law will live by doing so".⁺ ⁶But faith's way of making people perfectly holy says, "Don't say to yourself, 'Who is going to go up into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down); ⁷or 'Who is going to go down into the Hole which has no bottom?'* (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." ⁸But this is what it says,

"God's Word is right close to you.

It's in your mouth and in your heart".*

And it's talking about the message we're spreading, which tells about faith.

⁹This message says, "If you speak out and say, 'Jesus is my Lord'.* and if you believe in your heart that God has raised Him back to life from the dead, you will be saved." ¹⁰In other words, we use our heart to believe in Jesus, and this makes us perfectly holy in God's sight. And then we use our mouth to say clearly that Jesus is our Lord and this brings salvation to others. ¹¹After all, the Bible says, "The person who believes in Him will never be disappointed".⁺ ¹²You see, there isn't any difference between a Jew and a Greek, because Jesus is the Lord of all men and women, and He generously gives His blessings to all those who call upon Him for help. ¹³For "every person who calls upon the Lord for help will be saved".⁺

¹⁴But how can people call upon someone they don't

believe in? And how can they believe in someone they haven't heard of? And how can they hear unless someone brings them the news? ¹⁵And how can they bring the news if they haven't been sent out? It's just as the Bible says - "How beautiful are the people who come to bring good news!"⁺

¹⁶But all people don't believe the Good News. For example, Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"⁺ ¹⁷And so faith comes from hearing the message; and the message comes by Christ's command.

¹⁸But I have to say it. "It isn't possible that the people of Israel haven't heard, is it?" No, of course they have.

"The sound of their voices has gone out
all over the land,
and their words have spread
to the farthest corners of the country".⁺

¹⁹And I have to say, "It isn't possible that Israel didn't understand, is it?" And Moses was the first one to give God's answer, where He says,

"I will make you jealous of people
who aren't a nation at all.
I will make you angry with a nation of people
who have no understanding".⁺

²⁰And Isaiah speaks boldly and clearly when he says,
"Those who weren't looking for Me found Me,
and I showed Myself to those who didn't
ask for Me".⁺

²¹But when he speaks about Israel, God says, "I have stretched out My hands the whole day long to people who disobey Me and rebel against Me".⁺

Not All of Israel will be Lost

¹¹And so I must ask, "God hasn't rejected His people has He?" No, that could never happen. After all, look at me. I'm an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ²No, "God hasn't rejected His people"⁺ whom He chose in eternity. You certainly know, don't you, what the Bible says

in the story about Elijah, where it tells how Elijah was complaining to God about Israel? ³He said, "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I'm the only one left. And now they're trying to kill me".⁺

⁴But what answer did God give him? "I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who haven't fallen on their knees to worship Baal".⁺ ⁵And the same thing has happened at this present time. There is still a small part of Israel whom God has chosen because of His undeserved love. ⁶But since they were chosen by God's undeserved love, it wasn't because of anything they had done. Because if it was, God's love would no longer be undeserved.

⁷Therefore we must say that the people of Israel haven't found what they're looking for. But the chosen few have found it, and the minds of the rest of the people were turned to stone, ⁸just as the Bible says,

"God has given them minds which are sound asleep,
eyes that can't see, and ears that can't hear,
right down to this present day".⁺

⁹And David says,

"Their table where they feast must be turned
into a snare and a trap,
a trap which will make them fall
into sin and lose their faith,
and pay them back what they deserve.

¹⁰ Their eyes must be gouged out so that they can't see
and their backs must be bent over forever
under the yoke of slavery".⁺

Some Foreigners will Also be Saved

¹¹And so now I must ask, "The people of Israel haven't stumbled so that they will be utterly lost, have they?" No, that could never happen. But their sin has brought salvation to the people of the other nations,* so as to make the people of Israel jealous. ¹²And since their sin has made the world rich, and their loss has made the people of the other nations rich, how much

richer the world will be when the Kingdom of Heaven is filled with the people of Israel!

13 And so now I must say something to you people of the other nations. As long as I'm an apostle to the other nations, I'll try to do the best job possible, **14** in the hope that perhaps I can make the people of my own nation jealous and save some of them. **15** You see, when God threw the people of Israel aside, the people of the world were changed from God's enemies into His friends. And so when He takes the people of Israel back again, it will be like bringing the dead back to life again. **16** For if the first handful of dough is holy, the whole batch is also holy; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 It's true that some of the branches of the olive tree have been broken off, and you who are the branches of a wild olive tree have been grafted in among the other branches. In this way you now share with the original branches the rich life that comes from the root of the olive tree. **18** But you mustn't be bragging that you are better than the other branches. And if you are bragging, you must remember that you aren't supporting the root. The root is supporting you.

19 But then you will say, "The branches were cut out so that I could be grafted in." **20** And you're right. They were cut out because of their unbelief, and you are standing in their place because of your faith. But you must stop thinking so highly of yourself. Instead, you must be afraid. **21** You see, since God didn't spare the branches that were a part of the tree originally, there is no chance that He would spare you.

22 So now, notice how kind God is, and also how strict. He is strict with those who fall, but He is kind to you, if you keep on living in His kindness. And remember that you may also be cut out. **23** And if those original branches put aside their unbelief, they will be grafted in. For God is certainly able to graft them back in again. **24** After all, since you have been cut out of what was by nature a wild olive tree, and then contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how

much more ready will God be to graft those branches that were originally a part of the tree back into their own olive tree.

The Real "Israel"

25 You see, brothers and sisters, I want to tell you this secret, so that you won't be thinking that you already know everything. The secret is that something has happened to a part of the nation of Israel. Their minds have turned to stone until the Kingdom of Heaven is filled with the people of the other nations. **26** And this is how all Israel will be saved, just as the Bible says -

"The Savior will come from Zion.

He will take away Jacob's godlessness.

27 And this is the agreement I will make with them when I take away their sins".⁺

28 When we talk about the Good News, the people of Israel are now God's enemies for your sake. But when we talk about God's choice, He loves them because of their forefathers. **29** After all, God doesn't change His mind about the things He gives or the people He calls. **30** You see, there was a time when you were disobedient to God, but now God's mercy has come to you, because of their disobedience. **31** And in the same way at the present time the people of Israel have become disobedient to God because of the mercy you have received, so that now God's mercy may also come to them. **32** In other words, God has put all men and women into one group, calling them "disobedient", so that He can have mercy on all men and women.

We Must All Praise God

33 How tremendously deep are God's wisdom and knowledge!

How could anyone ever understand His decisions?

How could anyone ever figure out why He does what He does?

34 After all, "who knows what the Lord is thinking? Or who has ever given Him any advice?"⁺

35 "Or who has ever given Him anything
for which God must repay him?"⁺

36 Because everything comes from God,
and was created by Him, and exists for His benefit.
To Him belongs the glory and honor forever.
Yes, it really does!

Our New Life in Christ

12 And because God has been so merciful to us, I'm urging you, my brothers and sisters, to give yourselves to Him, body and soul, as living sacrifices dedicated to His service. For God will be pleased with this kind of spiritual worship from you. ²And you must stop using this world as your pattern for the way you live. Instead, you must let God change you completely by giving you a new mind, so that you will be able to recognize the good and pleasing and perfect things God wants.

³And using the gift which God gave me, I'm telling each one of you that you mustn't think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, you must think of yourself in a sensible way, just as God has given each one of you a certain amount of faith. ⁴You see, we all have a body made up of many parts, but the parts don't all have the same work to do. ⁵And in the same way all of us who are in Christ* are one body, in which we are also joined to all the other members.

⁶And since we all have different gifts, each of us has a different job to do, depending on the gift which God has given us. If God has given us the ability to speak as a prophet, we must speak only those things which fit in with what we believe. ⁷If we have the ability to serve others, we must be busy with our serving. If we're a teacher, we must be busy with our teaching. ⁸If our job is to encourage others, we must be busy encouraging. If we're sharing what we have with others, we must do it generously. If we're a church officer, we must do the best job possible. If we're one who helps those who are in trouble, we must do it with a happy heart.*

9Our love must be genuine, having nothing to do with anything that is wicked, and holding fast to what is good. **10**Our love to one another as brothers and sisters must be warm and deep; and we must try to outdo one another in showing honor and respect to the other person. **11**We must never be lacking in our determination to get things done, and our spirits should be bubbling over with enthusiasm as we serve our Lord. **12**Our hope must keep us joyful, and in our troubles we must patiently hold on to our faith, and spend much time in prayer. **13**We must always share what we have with God's people* when they need help, and always be kind to strangers who are traveling and need a place to stay and something to eat.

14You must always ask God to bless those who hate you and are trying to kill you.* Yes, ask Him to bless them, not curse them. **15**You must be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying. **16**And you must be perfectly agreed with one another, and stop thinking so highly of yourselves. Instead, you must have simple, ordinary people as your friends, and stop thinking that you know everything.

17When someone does something bad to you, you mustn't pay him back by doing something bad to him. And "you must make it your aim to do things that everyone agrees are good."⁺ **18**As far as possible, you must do everything you can to live at peace with everyone. **19**And you mustn't take revenge, my friends. Instead, let God's holy anger take care of your revenge, for the Bible says, " 'Revenge is for Me. I'm the one who will pay back,' says the Lord".⁺ **20**"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, give him a drink. You see, when you do this, you will be piling red-hot coals on his head".⁺ **21**You mustn't let evil get the best of you. Instead, you must win the victory over evil by doing what is good.

We Must be Obedient Citizens

13 Every person must obey the government authorities, for God has given every ruler his authority, and

whatever authorities there are have been put there by God. ²And this means that the person who opposes any authority is rebelling against God Himself; and people who do this will be punished.

³After all, our rulers do not frighten the person who does what is right, but they do frighten the person who does wrong. So if you want to live without being afraid of the authorities, keep on doing what is good, and they will say fine things about you. ⁴You see, every authority is God's servant, working for your good. But if you're doing something wrong, you'd better be afraid of him, because there's a reason why he carries that sword. After all, he's God's servant who brings down God's holy anger on the person who is doing something wrong. ⁵Therefore you must obey him, not just because you want to escape God's holy anger, but also because your conscience tells you to do so.

⁶And this is why you must also pay taxes, because these authorities are God's servants who give their full time and effort to serving Him. ⁷You must pay all of them what you owe them, your property tax to the property tax collector, your sales tax to the sales tax collector, and respect and honor to every one.

⁸You mustn't be in debt to anyone, except for your debt to love one another, for the one who loves the other person has fulfilled the Law. ⁹For example, take the commandments, "You must not have sex with anyone else except your own husband or wife," or "You must not kill," or "You must not steal," or "You must not have any sinful desires,"⁺ and any other commandment. They are all summed up by this one command, "You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself!"⁺ ¹⁰Christian love will never do any wrong to one's neighbor. Therefore, Christian love fulfills the Law perfectly.

The Last Day is Getting Near!

¹¹And you must do all this because you know what "day" it is we're living in.* And you know that the

time has come for you to wake up out of your sleep, because our salvation is closer now than it was when we came to faith. ¹²The night is nearly over, and the day is almost here. Therefore we must get rid of all the things that are done in the darkness, and put on the armor we need for fighting in the daylight.

¹³We must live clean, respectable lives, like people who are living in the daylight, and not be getting drunk and parading around town in a drunken condition, or living in sexual sins, or doing other filthy, immoral things, or be quarreling and filled with jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, you must try to live as the Lord Jesus Christ lived, and pay no attention to your sinful mind and body,* which fills your heart with sinful desires.

Weak or Strong. All are Brothers

¹⁴ You must accept the person whose faith is weak as your friend, but don't be arguing with him about his thoughts on this or that. ²For example, one person believes that he can eat everything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³The person who eats everything mustn't treat the one who doesn't eat like a worthless nobody. And the person who doesn't eat everything mustn't be condemning the one who does, because God has accepted him as a member of His family. ⁴And who are you to be condemning someone else's servant? It's his own master who must decide whether he is a good or bad servant. And he will be a good servant, because his master is able to make him a good servant.

⁵One person thinks one day is more special than another one, but another person thinks all days are alike. But each one must be certain in his own mind that he's doing the right thing. ⁶The person who thinks one day is special is doing it for the Lord. And the person who eats everything is doing it for the Lord, because he gives thanks to God. And the person who doesn't eat everything is doing it for the Lord, and he also gives thanks to God.

⁷You see, no one of us lives just for himself, and

no one's death affects just himself. ⁸The truth is that if we're living, we're living to please our Lord, and if we're dying, we're dying to please our Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹You see, Christ died and came back to Life so that He could be the Lord of both the living and the dead.

¹⁰So why are you condemning your brother? And why are you also treating your brother like a worthless nobody? After all, we must all stand before God in His courtroom to be judged, ¹¹for the Bible says,

" 'I am the Living God,' says the Lord,

'because every person will bow down and worship Me.

And every person will praise and honor his God'."*

¹²And this means that each of us will have to give a full report to God of all the things we have done.

¹³Therefore we must stop condemning one another. Instead, you must make up your minds not to do anything that will make your brother or sister trip and stumble, or set a trap that will make them fall into sin and lose their faith. ¹⁴I know that there's nothing which is "unclean"* in itself, because the Lord Jesus has made me sure that this is true.* But if a person believes something is "unclean", it is "unclean" for him.

¹⁵For example, if it's true that you're hurting your brother by what you eat, then you aren't living according to the rule of Christian love* any longer. You must stop destroying that brother of yours for whom Christ died by the food you eat. ¹⁶And you mustn't let people say nasty things about the good things you do. ¹⁷After all, the important things in God's Kingdom aren't eating and drinking. No, the important things in His Kingdom are being perfectly holy in His sight* and having the peace and joy that the Holy Spirit gives us. ¹⁸And the person who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and doing things that other people like. ¹⁹And this means that we must always be trying to do the things that bring peace and make one another grow stronger.

²⁰Therefore stop destroying any one of God's creatures by the food you eat. It's true that everything is "clean".

But it's wrong for a person to eat something that will make someone else stumble and fall into sin. ²¹The right thing is not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that will make your brother or sister stumble and fall into sin.

²²You must keep whatever you believe about these things between yourself and God. The one who doesn't condemn himself when he does what he thinks is right is a happy person. ²³But the person who isn't really sure about what he's eating is condemned if he eats it, because what he's doing isn't an act of faith. And everything that isn't an act of faith is a sin.

¹⁵ So we who are strong must put up with the faults and weaknesses of those who are weak, and not live just to please ourselves. ²Each of us must try to please our neighbor and do things that will be good for him and make him grow stronger. ³You see, even Christ didn't live just to please Himself, but as the Bible says, "The insults coming from those who are insulting You have fallen on Me".⁺

⁴You see, everything that was written in the Bible in the past was written to teach us something, so that as we patiently hold on to our faith and listen to the warnings and encouragement of God's Word, we will be filled with hope. ⁵And since God has given us this encouragement and the ability to patiently hold on to our faith, I pray that He will also help you to follow the example of Christ Jesus and be perfectly agreed with one another. ⁶Then with one heart and voice you will always be bringing glory and honor to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jews and Non-Jews Must Live in Harmony

⁷Therefore you must accept one another as friends, just as Christ has accepted you, so that God will be praised and honored. ⁸For I'm telling you that Christ came as a servant of the people of Israel to bring them God's truth and to fulfill the promises God made to their forefathers. ⁹But He also came so that the people

of the other nations* would praise God for His mercy, just as the Bible says -

"Therefore I will give You all praise and honor
among the people of the other nations.

Yes, I will sing Your praises".⁺

10 And in another place it says,

"You people of the other nations must celebrate
and be happy along with God's people".⁺

11 And again,

"The people of all nations must praise the Lord!

Yes, all nationalities must sing His praises".⁺

12 And in another place Isaiah says,

"Jesse's root will send up a shoot,
and a Man will rise up to rule
the nations of the world.

And the people of all the nations
will put their hope in Him".⁺

13 And I'm praying that our God, who gives us hope, will use your faith to fill you with all joy and peace, so that your hearts will overflow with this hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul Talks about His Work

14 Talking about myself, my brothers and sisters, I'm certain that your hearts are filled with good thoughts and your minds are filled with all knowledge, so that you're able to teach one another. **15** But in some parts

of this letter I have written to you in a very bold and open way to remind you of certain things. I have done this because of the special privilege God gave me **16** when He made me a servant of Christ Jesus and sent me to the people of the other nations to work as a special kind of priest by spreading God's Good News. And He did this so that those people of the other nations would become a pleasing sacrifice to God, since they have been made holy by the Holy Spirit.

17 Therefore the only thing I can boast about are the things I'm doing for God by the power of Christ Jesus.

18 Of course I don't dare to talk about anything except what Christ has done through me to make the people

of the other nations obey Him by what I have said and done. ¹⁹And it's been done by the power of miracles and wonderful things, and by the power of the Spirit, so that I could spread the Good News about Christ in a circle that reaches from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum. ²⁰And I have always made it my aim to spread the Good News in places where they have never heard about Christ, so that I wouldn't be building on someone else's foundation, ²¹but rather, as the Bible says, in places where

"The people who have never been told
about Him will see Him,
and those who have never heard
about Him will understand".⁺

²²And this is also why I have been kept so many times from coming to see you.

I'm Making Plans to Visit Rome

²³But right now I no longer have any place to work in this part of the world. And for many years I have wanted very much to come and see you. ²⁴And so I'm hoping to see you whenever I go through Rome on my way to Spain. And I'm hoping that after I have enjoyed your company for a while, you will give me a good send-off when I leave.

²⁵Right now however I'm on my way to Jerusalem to bring some help to God's people there.* ²⁶You see, some of God's people in Jerusalem are very poor, and the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have decided to send some money to help these people.* ²⁷They were happy to do it, and of course they owe it to them. For since the people of the other nations have received a share of the Jews' spiritual riches, they owe it to the Jews to help them with their earthly wealth. ²⁸And so when I finish this task and have this gift safely in their hands, I'm going to start out for Spain, and see you on the way. ²⁹And I know that when I get there, I'll be coming with Christ's full blessing.

³⁰And now my brothers and sisters, I'm urging you by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the

Christian love that comes from the Spirit, to help me by praying to God for me. ³¹Pray that I will be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my work in Jerusalem will be well received by God's people* there, ³²so that God will let me come and see you with a happy heart, and that you and I will both be refreshed by my visit there. ³³And I pray that our God, who gives us peace,* will be with you all. This is truly my prayer.

Personal Greetings to the People in Rome

¹⁶ And now I want to tell you what a fine person our sister Phoebe is. She's a helper* in the church in Cenchreae. ²And I want you to receive her as one of the Lord's own workers, the way God's people should, and be ready to help her any time she needs your help, for she has been a great help to many people, including myself.

³Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in the service of Christ Jesus.* ⁴These two have risked their own necks to save my life. But I'm not the only one who is thankful for what they have done. So are all the churches in all the different countries. ⁵Greetings also to the congregation that meets in their house.

Give my greetings to my dear friend Epainetus, who was the first person in the province of Asia to be brought to faith in Christ.

⁶Greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for you.

⁷Give my greetings to Andronicus and Junias, my fellow countrymen, who were also in prison with me. They're important men among the apostles, and they also came to believe in Christ before I did.

⁸Greetings to Ampliatus, my dear Christian friend.

⁹Give my greetings to Urbanus, our fellow worker in the service of Christ, and to my dear friend Stachys.

¹⁰Give my greetings to Apelles, who has proven

himself to be a true Christian; and greetings to those who belong to the family of Aristobulus.

11 Give my greetings to Herodion, my fellow countryman; and greet those who are believers in the family of Narcissus.

12 Give my greetings to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who are hard workers for the Lord; and greet my dear friend Persis, who has also done a lot of hard work for the Lord.

13 Give my greetings to Rufus, who is so dear to the Lord, and to his mother, who has also been a mother to me.

14 Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobus, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters in their congregation.

15 Give my greetings to Philologus and Julia, Olympas, Nereus and his sister, and all of God's people in their congregation.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

Stay Away from False Teachers!

17 I'm also urging you, my brothers and sisters, to keep your eye on those people who are acting in a way which doesn't agree with what you have been taught, teaching things which are causing divisions, and doing things that make people fall into sin and lose their faith. You must have nothing to do with such people. **18** You see, people like this aren't serving Christ our Lord. They're serving the appetites of their own sinful bodies.* And by their nice sounding words and smooth talk they're fooling good people and leading them astray.

19 You see, everyone has heard about your obedience, and I'm very happy to hear such things about you. But I also want you to be wise enough to do good things, and be the kind of people who never do bad things.

20 And our God who gives us peace* will soon crush

Satan under your feet.

I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS!*

Personal Greetings from Paul's Friends

21My fellow worker Timothy sends you his greetings, and so do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, my fellow countrymen.

23Gaius, in whose home I'm staying, sends you his greetings. The whole church here uses his house as their meeting place. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

22And I, Tertius, also send you my greetings. I'm the one who has written this letter, and I also believe in the Lord.

The Doxology

25God is the one who is able to make you strong. This is what Jesus Christ has told us, and it's a part of the Good News I'm spreading. It's also a part of God's secret truth, which was kept hidden for ages and ages in the past. **26**But now by the command of our eternal God this secret truth has been made known through the writings of the prophets, so that the people of all the nations will believe it and obey Him. **27**To this one true and wise God belongs the glory and honor forever, through Jesus Christ. Yes, it really does!

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH (Written from Ephesus in 55 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, whom God decided to call to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes.*

2 And I'm writing to God's church which is in Corinth, people who have been made clean and holy by Christ Jesus. And so now God calls you His people,* along with us and all those in every place who call Jesus Christ their Lord.

3 God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.*

God has been So Good to You

4 When I think of you people, I'm always thanking my God that He has given you His undeserved love through Christ Jesus. **5** For He has made you rich in every way by every word He has spoken to you and all the knowledge He has given you, **6** just as what we told you about Christ has found a firm place in your hearts. **7** Therefore you aren't lacking in any of God's gifts as you wait for the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will come back again so that everyone will see Him. **8** And God will also keep you strong right up to the end, so that no one will be able to accuse you of any sin on that Day of our Lord Jesus.* **9** And you can always depend on God, who has called you to be members of that group who are close, dear friends of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't be All Divided into Different Groups

10 And now I'm pleading with you, my brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all be perfectly agreed in everything you

*Helpful notes for 1 Corinthians begin on page 816

say, and not be all split up into different groups. Instead, you all should be agreed in everything you think and want to do. ¹¹You see, my brothers and sisters, some of Chloe's family have told me there's a lot of quarreling going on in your group.*

¹²What I mean is this. Everyone is saying, "I'm following Paul," or "I'm following Apollos,"* or "I'm following Peter," or "I'm following Christ."

¹³Is Christ now divided? It wasn't Paul who was put on the cross for you, was it? And you weren't baptized into some group belonging to Paul, were you?

¹⁴I'm thankful that I didn't baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, ¹⁵so that no one can say that you were baptized into some group belonging to me. ¹⁶Oh yes, I also baptized Stephanas and his family. But aside from them I don't remember that I baptized anyone else.

¹⁷You see, Christ didn't send me out to baptize. He sent me out to tell people the Good News. And He told me not to use big, wise-sounding words, so that Christ's cross wouldn't lose its meaning and power.

Christ is God's Wisdom and Power

¹⁸You see, the story of the cross is foolishness to the people who are heading for eternal death,* but it's God's power for us who are being saved. ¹⁹After all, the Bible says,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and I will do away with the understanding of
those who understand".⁺

²⁰So where does that leave this world's wise man, or this world's educated man, or the best speaker in this world? Isn't it true that God has shown that the world's wisdom is foolishness? ²¹For in His wisdom God has made it impossible for the people of the world to know Him through their own wisdom. Instead, He

⁺Verses quoted in 1 Corinthians are on page 878

decided to use His "foolish" message to save those people who believe in Jesus.

22And so while the Jews are asking for miracles, and the Greeks are looking for wisdom, **23**we are telling people the news about a Messiah* who was put on a cross. This message is a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the people of the other nations.* **24**But for those people whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, it's a message about a Messiah who is God's power and God's wisdom. **25**After all, God's foolishness is wiser than men's wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than men's strength.

26For example, look at God's invitation when it came to you, my brothers and sisters, and you will see that humanly speaking, not many of you were known for your wisdom, not many of you were in positions of authority and power, and not many of you were wealthy people. **27**No, God chose the foolish things of the world to make the wise people feel ashamed; He chose the weak things of the world to make the strong people feel ashamed; **28**and He chose the poorer people in the world, the worthless things of the world, things that are really nothing at all, to bring down to nothing the people who are something. **29**And He did this so that no human being can boast about anything when he stands in God's presence.

30So it's all God's work that you are now in Christ Jesus.* And for us Christ is God's wisdom, for He has made us perfect and holy in God's sight, and has set us free, **31**so that what the Bible says will come true - "The person who boasts must boast about what the Lord has done".⁺

My Message is Simply Christ on a Cross

2 And I want to remind you, my brothers and sisters, that when I came to Corinth to tell you about God's secret plan, I didn't use a lot of fancy words and claim to have great wisdom. **2**The truth is that I made up my mind that while I was with you I would forget about

everything except Jesus Christ, and the fact that He was put on a cross. ³And when I came to you, I was as weak as could be, and I was trembling with fear. ⁴And when I spoke and delivered my message, I didn't use high-pressure arguments that sounded very wise. But I depended on the proof the Spirit gives, and His power, ⁵because I didn't want your faith to be built on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

God has Given Us His Wisdom through His Spirit

⁶However there is wisdom in what we say when we're with people who are spiritually grownup, but it isn't this world's wisdom, or the wisdom of this world's leaders, who are losing their power. ⁷No, we're telling people about God's wisdom, which comes as a secret which has now been revealed. It tells about something God did before the world began to bring us glory and honor. ⁸None of the world's leaders have ever known anything about all this, for if they had, they would never have put our glorious Lord on a cross. ⁹But it's just as the Bible says,

"The things God has prepared for those who love him
are things no eye has ever seen,
and no ear has ever heard",⁺
nor have they ever entered into the mind of any
human being.

¹⁰But God has revealed all this to us through His Spirit, for the Spirit searches into everything, even into the depths of God's mind. ¹¹After all, who knows anything about the things that are in another person's heart and mind? The only one who knows such things is that person's own spirit within him. And it's the same with the things that are in God's heart and mind. No one except God's Spirit knows these things.

¹²And we haven't been given the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we can know all about the things that God in His love has given us. ¹³And when we talk about these gifts, we don't use words that we have learned from some "wise" human teacher, but words that we have learned from

the Spirit, explaining these spiritual things we have learned from the Spirit to spiritual people.

¹⁴But the person who isn't spiritual doesn't believe the things God's Spirit teaches, because they sound like nonsense to him. And he isn't able to understand them, because they can be understood only by a spiritual mind. ¹⁵The spiritual person however understands everything; but no one understands him.

¹⁶ "For who knows what the Lord is thinking?

Who understands Him?"⁺

But we have a mind like Christ's.

Apollos, Peter and I are All Fellow Workers

³ But when I was there in Corinth, my brothers and sisters, I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people. I had to talk to you like people whose lives are ruled by your sinful mind and body,* like newborn babies in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, because you weren't able to eat solid food yet. And you still aren't able even now, ³because your lives are still ruled by your sinful mind and body. After all, since you're jealous of each other and quarreling among yourselves, isn't it true that your lives are ruled by your sinful mind and body, and that you're living like everyone else in the world? ⁴For when one of you says, "I'm following Paul," and another one says, "I'm following Apollos," aren't you acting like everyone else in the world?

⁵After all, who is Apollos? And who is Paul? We're servants whom God used to bring you to faith, each one doing the work the Lord gave him to do, and using the ability the Lord gave him. ⁶I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it; but God made it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters amounts to anything. The only one who amounts to anything is God, who makes things grow.

⁸But the one who plants and the one who waters are a team, and each one will be paid his own wages, depending on the work he has done. ⁹In other words, we are God's fellow-workers, and you are God's field.

You are also God's building. ¹⁰Using the gifts God gave me, I laid the foundation, like an expert builder should do. And now someone else is putting up the building on that foundation. But each one must be careful how he builds.

¹¹After all, no one can lay any other foundation than the one God has already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²One person will build something made of gold on this foundation. Another will use silver, or precious stones. Others will use wood or grass or straw.

¹³And finally everyone will see what kind of work each person has done, because that Day* will make everything clear. You see, God will use fire to test every person's work, and show what kind of work it was. ¹⁴If what a person has built survives the fire, he will receive his wages. ¹⁵And if what he has built is burned up, he will lose it all. He himself however will be saved, but it will be just as though he had gone through the fire himself.

¹⁶You certainly know, don't you, that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit is living in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, because God's temple is holy. And that's what you are - His temple.

¹⁸A person must never fool himself. If anyone of you thinks he's a wise person in this world, he must become a fool, so that he can become truly wise. ¹⁹You see, this world's wisdom is foolishness in God's sight,* for the Bible says,

"He traps the wise by their own clever tricks".⁺

²⁰And in another place,

"The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise.

He knows how worthless they are".⁺

²¹So we learn that one must never brag about any human being. After all, everything belongs to you!

²²Paul, Apollos, Peter, this world, life and death, the present and the future - everything belongs to you! ²³And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

We are Christ's Slaves. He is Our Judge.

4 People must think of us as Christ's slaves who have been put in charge of God's secret truths. **2**And the one thing a master looks for in those whom he puts in charge of his business is proof that each one can be trusted. **3**But the thought that I might be judged by you people, or by any human court, means nothing at all to me. The truth is that I don't even try to judge myself. **4**You see, I don't really know that I have done anything wrong, but this doesn't mean that I'm perfectly holy. And besides, the Lord is the one who judges me.

5Therefore you must stop making any judgments before the time for judgment comes, which means until our Lord comes back again. He will bring out into the light all the things that are hidden in the darkness, and He will reveal all the desires and plans in people's hearts, so that everyone can see them. And then each person will receive his praise from God.

6My brothers and sisters, I have applied all these things to Apollos and myself for your sakes, so that by using us as examples, you will learn the meaning of the old saying, "Never go beyond what the Bible says." You see, I don't want any of you to be thinking that one person is better than some other person. **7**After all, who is it who makes you different from other people? And what do you have that hasn't been given to you? And so, since everything has been given to you, why are you bragging as though it's all something you hadn't been given?

Our Life as Apostles Isn't an Easy One

8Do you already have everything you need? Have you already become rich? Have you become kings without our help? Oh how I wish that you really had become kings, so that we could also be kings with you.

9You see, I think God has given us apostles* the lowest place, at the end of life's parade, like the captives in a king's victory parade who are going to be killed

in the arena. Because we have become something to be stared at and made fun of by the whole world, both by angels and men. ¹⁰We are fools because of Christ, but Christ has made you intelligent people. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honored by others, but no one honors us.

¹¹Right up to this very moment we're hungry and thirsty, without enough clothes to keep us warm. We're beaten and knocked around, wandering around without having any home. ¹²We wear ourselves out working with our own hands. When people say insulting things to us, we ask God to bless them.* When people hate us and try to kill us, we patiently put up with it. ¹³When people say all kinds of bad things about us, we reply in a friendly way. Right up to this present time, we have become something like the world's garbage, the worthless stuff that everyone throws away.

Settle Your Problems before I Come

¹⁴I'm not writing this to make you feel ashamed, but rather to warn you, as my own dear children. ¹⁵After all, you may have thousands of guardians* whom Christ has set over you, but you don't have a lot of fathers. The truth is that by the power and authority of Christ Jesus I became your father when I brought you the Good News. ¹⁶Therefore I'm begging you to try to do things the way I do. ¹⁷This is why I have sent Timothy to you. He's my own faithful child in the Lord, whom I love very much, and He will remind you of the way I live as a believer in Christ Jesus. And everywhere I go, in every church, this is the way I teach people to live.

¹⁸Some of you have become proud and puffed up, thinking that I'm not coming to see you. ¹⁹But I am going to come to see you very soon, if this is what the Lord wants. And then I'll find out for myself not only what these puffed-up people are saying, but what they're able to do. ²⁰You see, it isn't words that make God's Kingdom run, but power. ²¹Which do you want?

Shall I come to you with a rod to punish you, or in Christian love* and a kind and considerate spirit?

Do Something about Your Problem of Incest!

5 The report is going all around that there is sexual sin in your group, and a kind of sin that isn't even found among the people of the other nations,* that a man has taken his stepmother to be his wife. **2**And you people are puffed up and proud of yourselves? Shouldn't you rather have been filled with sadness, so that the man who has done this would have been thrown out of your group? **3a**Even though I'm not there with you in person, I'm right there, with you in spirit. And just as if I was right there, I have already decided, **4a**by the authority of our Lord Jesus, **3b**what must be done with the man who has done this.

4bYou must have a meeting, and I'll be with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus. **5**And you must hand this man over to Satan, so that his sinful mind and body* will be destroyed. It's the only way his spirit can be saved on the Day the Lord returns.*

6This boasting of yours isn't right. Don't you know that a little bit of yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough? **7**You must clean out the old yeast, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because you really are "no yeast" people.

After all, Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been killed. **8**Therefore we mustn't celebrate our festival with "bread" made with the old yeast, that is, with the yeast of evil and wickedness. Instead, we must use the "bread" of purity and truth, which has no yeast.

9I wrote to you in my letter* that you must have nothing to do with people who live in sexual sins. **10**But I certainly wasn't writing about the people of this world whose sexual lives are unclean, or people who are greedy, or robbers, or people who worship idols, for then you would have to leave this world completely. **11**The truth is that I wrote to you to tell you that if someone who calls himself one of your brothers

is sexually unclean, or greedy, or worships idols, or has a nasty tongue, or is a drunkard or a robber, you must have nothing to do with such a person. And you mustn't be eating with him.*

12After all, what business of mine is it to be judging those who are outside of our group? But isn't it true that you people must judge those in your own group?

13For God will judge those outside of your group. "You must throw that wicked man out of your group!"⁺

Settle Your Disputes among Yourselves

6 If one of your members has done something wrong to another one, do you dare to have the case decided by judges who are unbelievers, and not by God's people?*

2Don't you know that God's people are going to judge the world?* And so, since you're going to judge the world, aren't you good enough to serve as judges for little everyday arguments? **3**Don't you know that we're going to judge the angels? Then can't we decide what's right and wrong in things that happen in our everyday lives?

4And so if you have such cases having to do with everyday things, are you going to take men who aren't members of your church and appoint them as your judges? **5**Shame on you! Are things so bad that there isn't one single wise man in your group who can act as a judge in a quarrel between two brothers? **6**Can it be so bad that one brother starts a lawsuit against another brother, and does this in front of people who are unbelievers?

7Why, just having lawsuits against each other is a complete disgrace for you. Why don't you just let yourselves be hurt or robbed, and let it go at that?

8But you people go on injuring others, and robbing others; and you do it to your brothers!

9a-bYou certainly know, don't you, that people who do wrong will never have any part in God's Kingdom, which He has set aside to give to His children? Don't let anyone fool you! Those whose lives are sexually

unclean and those who worship idols ^{10b}will never have any part in God's Kingdom, which He has set aside to give to His children. ^{9c}And this includes those who have sexual relations with women who aren't their own wives, or with young boys, or with other men, ^{10a}as well as those who steal or are greedy, and drunkards, and those who have nasty tongues, and robbers. ¹¹These are the kind of people some of you used to be. But you have been washed clean and made holy, and God has accepted you as perfectly holy because of what our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God have done.

Your Christian Liberty has Some Limits

¹²There's a saying, "I'm allowed to do everything." But not everything is good for me. Yes, "I am allowed to do everything;" but I'm certainly not going to let anything make a slave out of me.*

¹³There's another saying, "Foods are meant for the stomach, and the stomach is meant for foods." But God is going to do away with all these things. And our body is not meant to be used for sexual sins, but for the Lord; and the Lord is the one who takes care of our body. ¹⁴Yes, God will raise us back to life by His power, just as He raised our Lord back to life.

¹⁵You certainly know, don't you, that your bodies are members of Christ's body? Shall I take the members of Christ's body therefore, and make them members of a prostitute's body?* I hope no one would ever think of doing such a thing! ¹⁶You certainly know, don't you, that when a man joins himself to a prostitute, they are one body? After all, the Bible says, "the two will become one body."⁺ ¹⁷And when a person joins himself to the Lord, they are one spirit. ¹⁸So you must stay away from sexual sins! Every other sin a person commits has nothing to do with his body; but when a person becomes a partner in sexual sins, he is sinning against his own body.

19You certainly know, don't you, that your body is a temple in which the Holy Spirit lives? * And that God has given you this Spirit? And you certainly know, don't you, that you aren't your own masters? **20**After all, Christ paid your ransom price when He bought you.* Therefore you must use your bodies to bring glory and honor to God.

An Answer to Your Questions about Marriage

7 And now I'll answer the questions you wrote about. It's a good thing for a man never to touch a woman. **2**But because of all the sexual sins around us, every man must have his own wife, and every woman must have her own husband. **3**And the husband must do for his wife everything that is required of him as a husband, and the wife must do the same for her husband. **4**For it isn't the wife, but the husband who is the master of his wife's body; and it isn't the husband, but the wife who is the master of her husband's body. **5**So you mustn't refuse each other's sexual desires unless you both agree to do so for a certain time, so that you can have all your time for prayer. And then you must go back to your normal way of life, so that Satan won't tempt you because you aren't able to control yourselves.

6But when I say this, I'm telling you what I think you should do, not what you must do. **7**But I wish everyone was like me. But every person has his own special gift from God. One person lives this way, another that way.*

8So to those who aren't married, and to the widows, I'm saying that it would be a good thing for them to stay single, just as I am. **9**But if they can't control themselves, they must get married. After all, it's better to get married than to be on fire with unsatisfied desires.

10And to those who are married, I'm giving you these orders. And they aren't my orders, but the Lord's. The wife must not let herself be separated from her

husband. **11**And if she has been separated from him, she must stay single, or else go back to her husband again. And the husband must not divorce his wife.

12And to the rest of you, I can only speak for myself, and not for the Lord. If one of the brothers has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she agrees to go on living with him, he mustn't divorce her. **13**And if one of the women has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he agrees to go on living with her, she mustn't divorce him. **14**You see, it's the wife who makes the unbelieving husband holy, and it's the Christian husband who makes the unbelieving wife holy. If this weren't so, your children would be unclean. But this way, they're holy.

15But if the unbelieving partner leaves, you must let him go. In such cases the brother or sister is free to do whatever he or she wishes. For God has called you to live in peace. **16**After all, how do you know, if you're a wife? You may save your husband. And how do you know, if you're a husband? You may save your wife.

God's Call Doesn't Change Our Place in Life

17Every Christian must go on living in the same conditions he was in when the Lord called him, and in whatever place in life God has given him. This is the rule I give the people in all the churches. **18**If a man was circumcised when God called him, he mustn't try to make himself look like he isn't circumcised. If a man wasn't circumcised when God called him, he mustn't be circumcised. **19**You see, it makes no difference whether a person is circumcised or not. But keeping God's commandments does make a difference.

20The rule is that every person must stay just as he was when God called him. **21**Were you a slave when God called you? Don't let that worry you. But if you can become a free man, by all means do so! **22**The truth is that the slave whom the Lord calls is the Lord's

free man. And in the same way, the free man whom the Lord calls is Christ's slave, ²³because He paid your ransom price when He bought you.* And now you mustn't become anyone else's slave.

²⁴Yes, brothers and sisters, God's rule is that every person must stay just as he was when God called him.

People Who aren't Married

²⁵You also asked about people who aren't married. I don't have any orders from the Lord for them. But since the Lord has been so merciful to me as to treat me as someone who can be trusted, I'll tell you what I think. ²⁶Because of the trouble we're having right now, I think it would be best for a person to stay just as he is. ²⁷Do you have a wife? Don't try to get rid of her. Are you single? Don't be looking for a wife.

²⁸On the other hand, if you do get married, you haven't done anything sinful. And if a young girl gets married, she hasn't done anything sinful. But those people who get married are going to have troubles in their everyday lives, and I'm trying to help you avoid those troubles.

²⁹And I'm telling you, brothers and sisters, that there isn't much time left. Therefore from now on those men who are married should live as if they had no wives. ³⁰And those who are crying should live as if they weren't, and those who are happy as if they weren't, and those who are buying things as if they had nothing. ³¹And those who are busy with the world and its things should live as if they had no use for the world at all, because this world, as we see it now, is going to disappear.

³²I want you to be without any worries. The man who isn't married worries about the Lord's business, and how he can please his Lord. ³³But the married man worries about worldly things, and how he can please his wife, ³⁴and because of this, his thoughts and interests are divided. In the same way the unmarried woman and the young girl worry about the Lord's

business, and they want to be holy in both body and spirit. But the married woman worries about worldly things and how she can please her husband.

35I'm telling you this for your own good, and not with the idea of forcing you to do something. But I do want you to live good, clean lives, and think only about the Lord, and not about other things.

People Who are Engaged

36Since one of the men there thinks he's not acting properly toward his girl, I would say that if the girl is now too old to find another husband,* and therefore he thinks they should get married, he should do what he wants. He isn't doing anything sinful. They should get married. **37**But if they don't have to get married, and the man has the full right to decide what he wants to do, and if he has decided in his own heart to keep the young lady as his girl, and has firmly made up his mind to do this, he will be doing a fine thing. **38**So my answer is that the man who marries his girl is doing a fine thing, but the man who doesn't marry her will be doing a better thing.

39A wife is not free to do as she wishes as long as her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to any man she wants, but only if he's a Christian. **40**But I think she will be happier if she stays unmarried, and I think I also have God's Spirit.

Food That has been Sacrificed to Idols

8 You also asked about food that has been given to idols as a sacrifice. We know that "we all have knowledge." But knowledge often makes a person puffed up with pride, while Christian love* builds a person up. **2**Any person who thinks he knows something still doesn't have the kind of knowledge he ought to have.* **3**But any person who loves God is a person God knows.

4So now let's talk about food that has been given

to idols as a sacrifice. We know that an idol is an image of something which doesn't even exist in the world, and that there is only one God. ⁵But even if these so-called "gods" do exist, either in heaven or on earth, so that there are many gods and many lords, ⁶yet for us there is still only one God, our Father, who has created everything, and we live for Him. And there is still only one Lord, Jesus Christ, whom God used to create everything, including ourselves.

⁷But not everyone knows this. And some people are so used to living in a world filled with idols that to this day when they eat anything that has been offered to an idol, they still think of it as belonging to that idol. And because their conscience is weak, it tells them that they are being made unclean.

⁸Food however isn't going to bring us any closer to God. We aren't losing anything if we don't eat, and we aren't gaining anything if we do eat. ⁹But you must watch out so that this freedom of yours to do whatever you please doesn't make those who are weak stumble and fall into sin and lose their faith.

¹⁰For example, suppose someone who knows that you are a well-educated Christian sees you having dinner in the temple of some idol. Isn't it true that if his conscience is weak, he will be encouraged to eat such food that is given to idols? ¹¹And so that weak person, who is your brother, for whom Christ died, will be destroyed by your knowledge. ¹²And at the same time that you're sinning against your brothers in this way, and wounding their weak consciences, you're also sinning against Christ. ¹³And therefore if it's true that food is making my brother stumble and fall into sin, I will never again eat any meat, so that I won't make my brother stumble and fall into sin and lose his faith.*

I Have Some Rights as an Apostle

⁹ Isn't it true that I'm a free man? Isn't it true that I'm an apostle?* Isn't it true that I have seen our

Lord Jesus? Isn't it true that you people are the results of my work for the Lord? ²If it's true that I'm not an apostle to other people, I certainly am to you. After all, the fact that you people believe in the Lord is proof of the fact that I'm an apostle. ³This is the way I defend myself when people question who I am, or what I have done.*

⁴I and my assistants certainly have the right to ask for food and drink, don't we? ⁵We certainly have the right to travel around with a Christian wife, like Peter and the other apostles, and the Lord's brothers, don't we? ⁶Are Barnabas and I the only ones who don't have the right to live without working with our hands?

⁷Who ever heard of a soldier paying his own expenses? Who ever heard of a farmer planting a field of grape vines, and not eating some of the grapes? Who ever heard of a shepherd taking care of a flock of sheep, and not drinking some of their milk?

⁸But you don't think I'm building my whole case on these ordinary everyday illustrations, do you? Doesn't God's Word also say the same things? ⁹After all, in Moses' Law it says, "You mustn't tie up the mouth of the ox that is knocking the grain off the stalks".⁺ And you don't think that God is concerned only about oxen, do you? ¹⁰Isn't it clear that He's talking about us? You see, God was writing that for our benefit, to tell us that the man who ploughs must work with hope in his heart, and the man who beats the grain off the stalks must work with the hope of getting a share of the crop.

¹¹Since we are the ones who have sowed the spiritual seeds for your benefit, is it too much that we should gather in a harvest of material things from you? ¹²Since others are sharing in this authority over you, don't we have a greater authority?

But I haven't Used My Rights

But we have never used this authority of ours. Instead, we have put up with all kinds of things, so as not to

do anything that would stop people from receiving the Good News about Christ.

13You certainly know, don't you, that the men who work in the temples get their food from the temple, and the men who offer the sacrifices get a part of the sacrifices for themselves? **14**In the same way, the Lord has also given orders to those who are telling people the Good News, that they should make their living from doing this.*

15But I have never used a single one of these rights. And I haven't written this letter with the idea that I will ever do so. You see, it would be better for me to die than (take any pay for my work, because this is the only thing I can boast about. No sir,)* no one is going to turn this boast of mine into empty talk! **16**You see, the fact that I'm spreading the Good News is nothing for me to boast about, because I'm forced to do so. And how terrible it would be for me if I don't spread the Good News. **17**After all, if I was doing this willingly, I would be getting paid. But I'm not doing it of my own free will. It's a job my Master has given me to do, and He's depending on me to do it. **18**What pay am I getting, then? It's knowing that as I spread the Good News, I will be giving it to people free of charge, so that I won't be using my right which the Good News gives me.

19You see, even though I'm a free man, a slave of no man, I have made myself everybody's slave, so that I can win as many people as possible. **20**When I worked among the Jews, I lived like a Jew, so that I could win the Jews. And even though I'm really not under the Law, when I am with those people who are under the Law, I live like a man who is under the Law, so that I can win those people who are under the Law.

21But when I worked among people who don't have the Law,* I lived like a man who didn't have the Law. Of course, I'm not a man who doesn't know God's Law. So I should say that I lived like a man who is under Christ's Law, so that I could win those people who

don't have the Law. **22**When I worked with people who were weak, I became weak, so that I could win the weak. I have worked among all kinds of people, and therefore I have lived in all kinds of ways, doing everything possible to save some of them. **23**And I'm doing all this for the sake of the Good News, so that I can share it with others.

24You certainly know, don't you, that when they have the races in the stadium, all the athletes run, but only one of them gets the prize? That's the way you must run - so that you will win the prize!

25And you know that every man who takes part in the games* does everything he can to train his body. They do it to get a crown* that soon withers and dies; but we're running to get a crown that will last forever.*

26Speaking for myself therefore, I'm not running just for the fun of it, and I'm not just shadowboxing.

27Instead, I'm always trying to knock out my sinful mind and body and bring it under complete control, so that I won't be thrown out of the race for some reason, after I have called others to run and explained the rules to them.

Warnings from the Past

10 You see, as my brothers and sisters I want you to know that all of our nation's forefathers were protected by the cloud,* and they all walked through the sea.* **2**And they were all baptized along with Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3**They all ate the same spiritual food* **4**and drank the same spiritual drink. You see, they kept on drinking from the spiritual rock which was always following them.* And that rock was Christ.* **5**But God wasn't pleased with most of those people, because their dead bodies were scattered all around in the desert.

6But all these things happened as examples for us, so that we won't be people who are filled with sinful desires for evil things, as those people were, **7**or begin to worship idols, as some of them did. As the Bible says, "God's people sat down to eat and drink, and

got up to dance."⁺ **8**And we mustn't become partners in any sexual sins, as some of them were, when twenty-three thousand of them were killed in one day.* **9**And we mustn't put Christ to the test, as some of them did, when they were killed by the snakes.* **10**And you mustn't be grumbling and complaining, as some of them did, when the angel of death destroyed them.*

11These things happened to those people to be examples for others. And they were written down to be a warning to us, because we are living in the time* when the world will come to an end. **12**Therefore the person who thinks he's standing firm must watch out so that he doesn't fall!

13You people haven't had any test that doesn't come to everyone. And you can depend on God that He won't let your tests become greater than you can stand. But along with every test, He will make a way out for you, by making you strong enough to hold up under it.

A Special Warning against Idolatry

14And this is why, my dear friends, you must continue to stay away from idol worship. **15**I'm talking to you as intelligent people, so you must be the judge about what I'm saying, whether to do it or not.

16When we give thanks and drink the cup which is filled with the Lord's blessing,* isn't it true that the wine is joined with Christ's blood? And when we break the bread and eat it, isn't it true that the bread is joined with Christ's body? **17**And the fact that there is one loaf of bread shows that we are one body, even though there are many of us, because all of us are sharing in that one loaf of bread.

18Look at the earthly nation of Israel. Isn't it true that the people who eat the sacrifices offered at their altar are joined together as a sacrifice to God?

19So what am I saying? Am I saying that food can really be given to an idol to eat? Or that an idol is

really God? **20**No, I'm saying that these things people are sacrificing are being given to demons, and not to a god. And I don't want you to become partners with any demons!

21You can't be drinking from the Lord's cup and also from a demon's cup. You can't be eating at the Lord's table and also at a demon's table. **22**Are we trying to make the Lord angry? We aren't stronger than He is, are we?

Do Everything to Bring Glory to God

23"We're allowed to do everything," but not everything is good for us. "We're allowed to do everything," but not everything makes us better Christians.* **24**No one must ever be trying to do only what is best for himself. Instead, he must try to do what is best for others.

25Eat anything that is sold at the market, and don't ask any questions because of your conscience. **26**After all, "The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord".⁺ **27**And if someone who isn't a believer invites you to his house, and you want to go, eat anything they serve you, and don't ask any questions because of your conscience.

28But if someone says to you, "This meat was sacrificed in one of the temples," you mustn't eat it for the sake of that man who told you this and his conscience. **29**Notice that I'm not talking about your conscience, but the other person's conscience.

But someone will say, "Why is my freedom to do something decided by someone else's conscience? **30**I always thank God for whatever He gives me. So why should others say bad things about me because of something I'm thanking God for?"

31Here is the rule to follow. Whether you're eating or drinking, or whatever you're doing, do it to bring glory and honor to God. **32**But you must also be sure that you don't cause anyone to stumble and fall into sin, whether they are Jews, or Greeks, or members

of God's church. **33**That's the way I live. I'm always trying to do everything so as to please everyone. And I never try to do what is best for myself, but what is best for everyone else, so that they will be saved. **11** And you must try to do things the way I do, just as I'm trying to do things the way Christ did.*

Covering the Head

2I must say that you're a wonderful group of people because you always remember me, and hold fast to the things our Lord said and taught, just as I have passed them on to you.

3But I want you to know that Christ is every man's Head; and the husband is the wife's head; and God is Christ's Head. **4**And every man who prays or speaks as a prophet* with something on his head is not showing the proper respect for his Head. **5**And every woman who prays or speaks as a prophet without having something on her head is not showing the proper respect for her head. You see, this is exactly the same thing as having her head shaved.* **6**And the rule is that any woman who doesn't have her head covered in public must also have her hair cut short.* And since it's a mark of disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut short or have her head shaved, she must keep her head covered in public.

7However a man must not keep his head covered, because he is God's image, and God's most glorious creation. But the woman is man's most glorious creation. **8**For the man didn't come from the woman, but the woman came from the man. **9**And besides, the man wasn't created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man. **10**And it's because of the angels* that a wife must always have the mark of her husband's authority on her head.*

11However the Lord has arranged it so that there can't be a woman without a man, and there can't be a man without a woman. **12**For just as the first woman came from the man, so each man is brought into the

world by a woman. And all things come from God.

13And now you must decide this among yourselves. Is it right for a woman to pray to God without having something on her head? **14**Doesn't nature itself teach you that it's a disgraceful thing for a man to have long hair? **15**But it's a part of a woman's beauty to have long hair, because her long hair is given to her to serve in place of a veil. **16**And if someone thinks he wants to argue about this, we certainly don't have any other way of doing things, and God's churches don't either.

You're Dishonoring the Lord's Supper

17As I give you these next orders, I'm certainly not going to praise you for the way you're acting, because in your meetings you're doing more harm than good. **18**You see, in the first place I hear that when you get together for your church meetings, you're all split up into different groups; and I believe that at least a part of this is true. **19**I suppose you must have different groups in your congregation, so that everyone will know which ones are the real Christians.*

20But because of your divisions, it isn't possible for you to eat the Lord's Supper when you all come together at your meeting place, **21**because at the dinner each one brings his own food. And so while one person is going hungry, another one is getting drunk. **22**Is it possible that you don't have homes where you can eat and drink? Or, is it that you don't have any respect for God's church, and are trying to make the people who don't have anything feel ashamed? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you for acting like this? I certainly won't!

Let's Talk Again about the Lord's Supper

23As you know, our Lord has told me all about what happened that night when He was handed over to His enemies, and I have already passed all this on to you. That night the Lord Jesus took a little round loaf of bread* **24**and said a prayer of thanksgiving. Then

He broke it into pieces and said, "This is My body, which is being broken for you. Keep on doing this to remember Me." ²⁵And after they had eaten He also took the cup and said, "This cup is the new agreement,* sealed by My own blood. Keep on doing this every time you drink it to remember Me".* ²⁶You see, until the Lord comes back again, you are telling people about His death every time you eat this bread and drink this cup of wine.

²⁷And this means that any person who eats the Lord's bread and drinks from His cup in an unworthy way will be sinning against the Lord's body and blood. ²⁸And therefore a person must examine himself before he eats that bread or drinks that wine, ²⁹because the person who eats and drinks without knowing that the body is there is eating and drinking eternal punishment for himself. ³⁰And this is why a lot of people in your group are sick and in poor health, and quite a few of them are falling asleep.*

³¹But if we were always acting as our own judge, we wouldn't be condemned. ³²When the Lord judges us however, He is punishing us to teach us a lesson, so that we won't be condemned with the people of the world.

³³Therefore my brothers and sisters, when you meet together to have your dinner, each one of you must wait for the others to be served before you eat. ³⁴And if anyone is hungry, he must eat at home, so that God won't condemn you when you meet together. And I'll take care of the other things when I get there.

The Spirit's Gifts

12 And next, my brothers and sisters, we'll talk about the spiritual things, because I want you to know all about them. ²You know that when you were unbelievers, you were always being led away in one way or another to idols that can't even talk. ³And therefore I want you to know that no person who is speaking by the power of God's Spirit could ever say,

"Jesus should be placed under a curse by God and destroyed!" And no person will ever be able to say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁴First of all, there are different kinds of gifts, but it's the same Spirit who gives them. ⁵And there are different ways of serving, but it's the same Lord who is being served. ⁶And there are different activities, but it's the same God who provides the power in all cases to do all these things.

⁷The Spirit also makes His presence known to every person, so that he or she can do something useful. ⁸For example, the Spirit gives one person a message filled with wisdom, while He gives another person a message filled with knowledge. ⁹The same Spirit gives one person faith, while another receives gifts to heal the sick, ¹⁰and someone else receives the power to work miracles. Some other person receives the ability to speak as a prophet, and another one the ability to see the difference between the prophets. He gives one person the ability to speak in other languages, and another one the ability to translate such languages so that others will know what they mean. ¹¹But it's the same one Spirit who gives the power to do all these things, giving each person whatever gifts He wants that person to have.

We're All Members of One Body

¹²You see, Christ is like a human body. That body is one person, but it has many parts. And even though there are so many of them, all these parts are just one body. And it's the same with Christ. ¹³You see, we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether we're Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people. And we all have been filled with one Spirit.

¹⁴And as we have said, our body isn't just one part, but many parts. ¹⁵So if the foot should say, "I'm not a part of the body, because I'm not a hand," that certainly wouldn't change the fact that it's a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "I'm not a part of the body, because I'm not an eye," that

certainly wouldn't change the fact that it's a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body was an eye, how could we hear anything? And if the whole body was an ear, how could we smell anything? ¹⁸But the truth is that God has put each one of the parts just where He wants it to be in the body. ¹⁹But if all the members were the same part, how could there be a body? ²⁰But as we said, there are many parts, but only one body.

²¹The eye however can't say to the hand, "I don't need you," nor can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you." ²²The truth is that the parts of the body which seem to be the weakest are really the most necessary. ²³And the parts of the body which seem to be the least important are the ones we think of as being the most valuable. And the parts we're the most ashamed of are the ones we pay the most attention to when we get dressed, ²⁴while the nice looking parts don't need all that attention.

But when God created our human body He gave greater honor to the part that needs it, ²⁵so that the parts would never fail to work together, and all of them would have the same care and concern for each other. ²⁶And so if one part is injured, all the parts suffer along with it; and if one part is given special praise, all the parts have the same feeling of joy.

²⁷So you people are Christ's body, and each one of you is a part of it.* ²⁸And God has given each person his place in His Church. First He put in the apostles, second, the prophets, and third, the teachers. Then He added the power to work miracles, and then the gifts of healing the sick and helping other people. And then He added people to get things organized and keep it all running smoothly, and the power to speak in other languages.

²⁹They weren't all apostles, were they? Or all prophets, or all teachers? They didn't all work miracles, did they? ³⁰Or all have the gift of healing the sick? And they don't all speak in other languages, or translate other languages, so that others can understand them,

do they? ³¹But you must always want to have the greater gifts. And I'm going to show you what is by far the best road to follow.

The Spirit's Greatest Gift

13 Let's suppose I can speak in many languages, including the language of the angels. But if I don't have any Christian love* in my heart, I'm just someone who makes a lot of noise, like a trumpet, or a clanging cymbal. ²Or let's suppose I can speak as a prophet, and know all of God's secret truths, and have all knowledge, and have so much faith that I can move mountains from one place to another. But if I don't have any Christian love in my heart, I'm nothing at all. ³Or let's suppose I give away all my belongings and even sell myself into slavery to help others, so that I can have something to boast about. But if I don't have any Christian love in my heart, it wouldn't do me any good at all.

⁴Christian love is patient and kind. It isn't jealous or boastful or puffed up with pride. ⁵It never does anything to be ashamed of, and never acts in a selfish way. It doesn't get angry, or remember all the wrong things other people do. ⁶It's never happy about anything that is sinful or wrong, but is always happy with the truth. ⁷It never talks about the faults of others and never loses its faith, its hope, or its patience.

⁸There will never be a time when Christian love won't be needed. Now there are people speaking as prophets, but God will put an end to all this. Now there are people speaking other languages, but this will stop too. Now there is knowledge, but the need for this will also come to an end.

⁹You see, now we know only a part of what there is to know, and we're given only a part of God's Word to speak. ¹⁰But when everything becomes perfect, God will do away with all the imperfect things. ¹¹When I was a little child, I talked like a little child, I thought like a little child, and I counted like a little child.

But now that I'm a man, I'm all through with childish things.

12You see, now it's like we're looking at things in a mirror, and not seeing them clearly.* But then we'll see everything face to face. Now I know only a part of what there is to know, but then I'll know everything, just as God knows all about me. **13**And so we're left with these three things - faith; hope and Christian love. And the greatest of these is Christian love. **14** So you must try to fill your heart and your life with Christian love.

The Next Greatest Gift - Speaking as a Prophet

1bAnd you must be eager to have God's spiritual gifts, especially the gift of speaking as a prophet.*

2You see, the person who speaks in another language isn't talking to people, but to God. What I mean is that no one listens to what he's saying. He's saying things by the power of the Spirit, but the others can't understand them. **3**But the person who speaks to others as a prophet says things that will strengthen those who hear him, and things that give them encouragement and comfort. **4**The person who speaks in another language is strengthening himself, but the person who speaks as a prophet is strengthening the Church.

5I wish all of you could speak in other languages, but I wish even more that you could all speak as prophets. Because the person who speaks as a prophet is doing a greater work than the one who speaks in other languages, unless that person translates what he's saying so that others will know what he means and the church will grow stronger.

6For example, my brothers and sisters, suppose I come to you speaking in other languages. What good will it do you if I don't speak to you in a way that will explain things you don't understand, or bring you some new knowledge, or give you a special message from God, or explain the Bible to you?

7It's exactly the same with things like a flute or

a harp, which make sounds, even though they're not alive. If each note isn't sounded clearly and distinctly, how will anyone recognize the tune that's being played? ⁸Or if the bugle doesn't sound a clear call, who will get ready for the battle?

⁹That's also the way it is with you people when you're speaking in another language. If you don't speak words that people understand, how will anyone know what you're saying? In fact, you might as well be talking in an empty room.

¹⁰Think of all the different sounding words there are in the world, and there isn't a single one that doesn't have a meaning. ¹¹However if I don't know the meaning of some word, I will be a foreigner to the person who is speaking it, and the one who is speaking will be a foreigner to me.

¹²And this is the way it should be with you people. Since you're so eager to have the Spirit's gifts, you must be eager to be filled to overflowing with those gifts which will make the Church grow stronger.

¹³For example, the person who speaks in another language must always be praying that he will be able to translate what he's saying, so that other people will know what he means. ¹⁴You see, if I'm praying in some foreign language, my spirit is praying, but my mind isn't doing anything useful. ¹⁵So what must I do? As I pray with my spirit, my mind must also be praying the same words. And as I sing with my spirit, my mind must also be singing the same words.

¹⁶And when you're giving thanks to God with your spirit, how will the ordinary man who is uneducated ever say "amen" to your prayer of thanksgiving, since he doesn't know what you're saying? ¹⁷You may be praying the most beautiful prayer of thanksgiving, but the other man isn't being strengthened at all.

¹⁸I thank God that I can speak in more languages than any of you people. ¹⁹But in a church service I would rather speak five words that can be understood than ten thousand words in some other language,

because I want the people to learn something.

20My brothers and sisters, you must stop thinking like children. Instead, you must be little children so far as bad things are concerned, but think like full-grown adults. **21**In the Bible it says,

"I will speak to this nation using other languages,
and with the lips of strangers;

but even so, they won't listen to Me",[†] says the Lord.

22So we must learn that speaking in other languages is a miracle God uses for the people who aren't believers, not for the believers. But speaking as prophets is a miracle God uses for those who are believers, not for the unbelievers. **23**For example, suppose the whole church comes together at their meeting place, and all the people are speaking in other languages. And then, suppose some ordinary people who are uneducated come in, or some people who aren't believers. Won't they say that you're crazy? **24**But if everybody is speaking as a prophet, and some unbeliever or uneducated person comes in, everyone will talk to him about his sins, and try to convince him that he's a sinner, **25**and his secret thoughts will be brought out into the open. And therefore he will fall down with his face on the ground and worship God,^{*} saying,

"God is really here in your group."

26And so, brothers and sisters, this is what you should be doing. When you come together to worship, one person can sing a psalm, another can explain something in the Bible, another can tell about something God has revealed to him, another can speak in another language, and another can translate what is said so that the others can understand it. But everything must be done to strengthen the people.

27And if someone is going to speak in another language, there mustn't be more than two, or at the most three; and only one should be speaking at a time. And someone must translate what is being said, so that the others will understand it. **28**And if there isn't anyone who can translate what is said, the person

who has the gift of speaking in other languages must keep quiet in the meeting. Of course he can talk to himself and to God.

29 And only two or three prophets* must be allowed to speak, and the others must be the judges of what they say. **30** And if God reveals something to someone else who is sitting there, the first speaker must stop. **31** You see, you can all speak as prophets, one by one, so that everyone can learn and be encouraged, **32** and also so that those who speak as prophets will control their speaking. **33a** You see, our God loves peace and harmony, not confusion.

34a The women however must keep quiet in the meetings, because they aren't allowed to speak. **33b** This is the rule that is followed in all the churches of God's people,* **34b** for the Bible says that the wives must be obedient.* **35** And if there's something they want to know, they must ask their husbands at home, because it's a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in a meeting. **36** Did God's Word start out from you people in Corinth? Or has it come only to you?

37 If anyone claims to be a prophet or a spiritual person, he must know very well that what I'm writing to you is the Lord's commandment. **38** And if anyone doesn't know this, pay no attention to him.

39 And so, brothers and sisters, you must be eager to speak as a prophet, and you mustn't stop people from speaking in other languages. **40** But everything must be done in a proper and orderly way.

Remember the Good News I Brought You!

15 And now, brothers and sisters, I'm going to remind you of the Good News I brought to you and you received, and on which you're now standing firmly. **2** That message is also bringing you salvation, if you're really holding on to it, and if you have a true faith.*

3 You see, I passed on to you the things I had also learned. And some of the most important things were that Christ died for our sins, just as the Bible says,*

⁴and that He was buried, and that He was raised back to life on the third day, just as the Bible says.* ⁵I also told you that Peter saw Him, and later the twelve apostles also saw Him. ⁶And after this, over five hundred brothers and sisters saw Him, all at the same time. Most of those people are still alive, although some of them have fallen asleep.* ⁷After this James* saw Him, and then all the apostles.* ⁸And last of all, He appeared to me, although I was like a child that is born too early and isn't a normal child.*

⁹You see, I'm certainly the least of all the apostles. For I'm not good enough to be called an apostle, because I tried to destroy God's Church. ¹⁰But God's undeserved love made me what I am. And that love of His which reached out to me hasn't been an idle, useless thing. No indeed. I have worked much harder than all the others. Of course, it wasn't I who did it. It was God's undeserved love which was working along with me. ¹¹But whether it's I or the others, this is the news we're spreading, and this is what you have come to believe.

The Anchor of our Faith and Hope

¹²And since we're all spreading this news that Jesus has been raised back to life from the dead, how can some of the people in your group be saying that there is no such thing as the dead rising back to life? ¹³And if it's true that there is no such thing as the dead rising back to life, then Christ isn't alive right now. ¹⁴And if it's true that Christ isn't alive right now, then we have no news to spread, and you have nothing to believe. ¹⁵And then we're also shown to be people who are telling lies about God, because we have said that God raised Christ back to life, when He didn't do any such thing if it's really true that the dead aren't raised back to life.

¹⁶As we said, if it's true that the dead aren't raised back to life, then Christ isn't alive right now. ¹⁷And if it's true that Christ isn't alive right now, your faith means nothing, and you're still dead in your sins. ¹⁸And

that would also mean that the people who have fallen asleep believing in Christ are lost. ¹⁹And if it's true that our hope in Christ ends when we die, we must be pitied more than anyone else in the whole world.

²⁰But it's true that Christ has been raised back to life from the dead as proof that all those who are sleeping will be raised back to life. ²¹You see, it was a man who brought death into the world, and it was also a man who started the dead rising back to life. ²²In other words, everybody dies because of what Adam did, and in the same way everybody will be made alive because of what Christ did.

²³But each one will be raised back to life in his own turn. Christ was the first, and next those who belong to Christ will be raised when He comes back again.* ²⁴And then the end will come, when Christ hands the Kingdom over to God His Father, after He has destroyed every government, and every authority and power.

²⁵You see, Christ must rule as King until He puts all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶And death will be the last enemy to be destroyed. ²⁷After all, this is what the Bible says, "God has put everything under His feet".⁺ Of course, when it says "everything has been put under" His feet, it's clear that this doesn't include the one who has put all these things under Him. ²⁸But when everything has been put under Him, then the Son will place Himself under His Father, who has already put everything under Him, so that God can rule completely over everything.

²⁹If this isn't true, what are those people who are being baptized for the dead hoping to accomplish? If it's true that the dead can't possibly be raised back to life again, why are those people being baptized for them? ³⁰And why do we also put ourselves in danger every hour of the day? ³¹Yes, brothers and sisters, just as surely as I can boast about you because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done, I swear that I face death every day. ³²But even if it's true, as

the saying goes, that "I have fought with wild animals" here in Ephesus, what good would that do me? If it's true that the dead aren't going to be raised back to life,

"Let's eat and drink,

because tomorrow we're going to die".⁺

33Don't let anyone fool you and lead you astray. "Bad friends will ruin a good character".* **34**Come back to your right senses as you should, and stop doing sinful things, for some of you know nothing about God. I'm saying this to make you feel ashamed.

Our Resurrection Bodies

35But someone will ask, "How are the dead going to be raised back to life again? What kind of a body will they have when they rise?"

36You fool! The seed you plant in the ground doesn't come to life unless it dies. **37**And when you plant that seed, you aren't putting in the ground the plant that it's going to become, but just a simple little seed - perhaps a grain of wheat, or one of the other grains. **38**And God then gives it whatever kind of a body He wishes. Yes, He gives every kind of seed its own special body.

39But every living creature doesn't have the same kind of a body. Human beings have one kind of body, animals have another kind of body, birds have another kind, and fish still another kind. **40**There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, and the beauty of the heavenly bodies is entirely different from that of the earthly bodies. **41**The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another kind of beauty, and the stars still another kind. And as you know, one star is quite different from another star in beauty.

42And this is the way it will be when the dead rise back to life again. When the body is planted in the ground, it's decaying; when it's raised again, it will be free from all decay. **43**When it's buried, it's ugly; when it's raised again, it will be beautiful. When it's

buried, it's weak and sickly; when it's raised again, it will be strong. ⁴⁴When it's buried, it's a physical (animal) body;* when it's raised again, it will be a spiritual body.* If it's true that there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵This is also what the Bible says, "The first man (Adam) became a living creature (animal)",⁺ but the last man (Adam) is a life-giving Spirit.* ⁴⁶However we don't get our spiritual body first, but our physical body, and then the spiritual body.

⁴⁷The first man came from the dust of the ground; the second Man came from heaven. ⁴⁸So those bodies which come from the dust of the ground are like the first man, who came from the dust; and those bodies which come from heaven are like the second Man, who came from heaven. ⁴⁹And just as we have had bodies that are like the man who came from the earth, we're also going to have bodies that are like the Man who came from heaven.

⁵⁰So what I'm saying, brothers and sisters, is that our sinful bodies of flesh and blood* can never have any part in God's Kingdom, which He has set aside to give to His children,* nor can that which is decaying have any part in that which is free from all decay. ⁵¹But listen carefully, and I'll tell you a secret. Not all of us will fall asleep;* but all of us will be changed. ⁵²And it will happen in a split second, in the blink of an eye, at the last bugle call.* You see, the bugle will sound, and the dead will be raised back to life, and we who are believers will all be changed, and be free from all decay.

⁵³After all, this decaying body must be changed so that it can't decay; and this dying body must be changed so that it can't die. ⁵⁴And when this decaying body is changed so that it can't decay, and this dying body is changed so that it can't die, then the saying that is written in the Bible will come true, "Death has been swallowed up in victory".⁺

⁵⁵"O death, where is your victory now?

O death, where is your stinger, which kills us?"⁺

56You see, the stinger death uses to kill us is sin, and the Law gives sin its power. **57**But we thank God, who always gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58Therefore my dear brothers and sisters, you must become firm and unmovable. And you must always be busy working in our Lord's business, because you know that the hard work you do for the Lord is never wasted.

Get the Collection Ready!

16 You also asked about the collection for God's people.* You must do the same thing I told the churches in Galatia to do. **2**Every Sunday each one of you must put away whatever he can, depending on his income, and save it up in a safe place, so that there won't have to be any collections when I come. **3**And when I get there, you'll have to pick out some men you trust, and I'll give those men some letters of introduction and send them off to carry your gift to Jerusalem. **4**And if it seems best that I should go too, they'll go along with me.

I Plan to Come to See You

5I'm going to come to see you after I go through Macedonia, because that's the road I'm going to take. **6**But when I get to Corinth, I'm going to stay a while. I may even spend the winter there with you, so that you can give me a good send-off to wherever I may be going next. **7**You see, this time I don't want to see you for just a few days while I'm passing through. Instead, I hope to stay with you for some time, if our Lord lets me do so. **8**However I'm going to stay here in Ephesus until Pentecost, **9**because God has opened up the door for us to do a lot of good work here, and there are also many enemies.

News about Timothy and Apollos

10If Timothy comes to Corinth, see to it that he has nothing to be afraid of while he's there with you,

because he's working at our Lord's business, just as I am. ¹¹Therefore no one must look down on him as if he's a nobody.* And you must give him a good send-off when he leaves, with a prayer that he will have nothing to worry about or be afraid of, so that he can come back to me, because I and the brothers here are waiting for him.

¹²You also asked about our brother Apollos.* I urged him very strongly to go and see you with the other brothers, but he really didn't want to go right then. He'll come however when he thinks it's the right time.

Final Requests and Greetings

¹³You must always stay awake and on your guard, and you must always be standing firm in your faith, and be brave and strong. ¹⁴And everything you do must be done with Christian love.*

^{15b}You know that Stephanas and his family were the first people to believe the Good News in the province of Achaia. And you know that they have offered themselves as servants to help God's people.* ^{15a}And now brothers and sisters, I'm also urging you ¹⁶to be obedient to people like this, and to everyone who is working and laboring with them.

¹⁷I'm very happy that Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus have come to see me. They have made up for the fact that the rest of you couldn't be here, ¹⁸because they have made me feel like a new man. And they have done the same for you. You must thank men like this for what they have done.

¹⁹The churches in the province of Asia send you their greetings. And Aquila and Prisca,* and the church that meets in their home, send you their warmest Christian greetings. ²⁰All the brothers send you their greetings.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21AND NOW IN MY OWN HANDWRITING - GREETINGS FROM PAUL! **22**IF A PERSON DOESN'T LOVE OUR LORD, HE MUST BE PUT UNDER GOD'S CURSE TO BE DESTROYED.

MARANA THA (COME, O LORD!)*

23I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS. **24**AND MY LOVE IS WITH ALL OF YOU WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.*

PAUL'S SECOND* LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH

(Written from Macedonia, perhaps Philippi, in 56 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, whom God decided to call to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy.

And I'm writing to God's church which is in Corinth, and to all God's people* in the whole province of Achaia.

2 God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves and their peace.

I'm Glad We Can Help You in Your Troubles

3 We must praise our God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because He is a Father who takes pity on those who need help, and a God who gives us all the encouragement and help we need. **4** He gives us encouragement and help every time we're in trouble, so that we will be able to give encouragement and help to others every time they're in trouble by using the same encouragement and help which God gives us. **5** It's true that some of Christ's sufferings overflow into our lives, but it's also true that through Christ God's encouragement and help overflows into our lives.

6 If we're having troubles, it's because we're here to bring you encouragement, help and salvation. And if God is encouraging and helping us, it's so that we can give you the encouragement and help which will strengthen you to hold on patiently under the same kind of sufferings we're going through. **7** And when we think of you, we have a firm strong hope in our heart, because we know that you're sharing our encouragement and help in the same way that you're sharing our sufferings.

*Helpful notes for 2 Corinthians begin on page 822.

⁸You see, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the troubles which came to us in the province of Asia, because it was a terribly heavy load, more than anyone could carry. And it got so bad that we thought there was no way that we would even live through it. ⁹In fact, in our own minds, we were sure that we were going to die.* But this happened so that we would not go on trusting in ourselves, but in our God, who raises the dead back to life. ¹⁰Yes, He's the one who rescued us from such a terrible death, and He's able to do it again. And so we're trusting in Him that He will rescue us again. ¹¹We're also hoping that you will help us by praying for us, so that God will show His kindness to us in answer to all the prayers that are being made for us by so many people.

Let Me Explain about Our Change in Plans

¹²You see, the one thing we have to boast about is that our conscience tells us that we have lived in this world with the kind of honesty and purity that comes from God, and that our lives haven't been controlled by our sinful human wisdom, but by God's undeserved love. And this is especially true in our dealings with you. ^{13a}For example, we're not writing anything else to you but what you're reading now, or what you already know very well. ^{14a}You have come to know us fairly well, ^{13b}and I hope that you will finally come to realize ^{14b}that we are people you will be proud of on the Day of our Lord Jesus,* just as you are people we're going to be proud of on that Day.

¹⁵And I was so sure that you felt like this that my first plans were to make you twice as happy ¹⁶by going through Corinth on my way to Macedonia, and then coming to see you again on my way back from Macedonia, and have you give me a good send-off on my way to Judea.

¹⁷Therefore since this is what I wanted to do, you certainly don't think that I changed my mind for some silly reason, do you? Or that I make my plans in a sinful human way, so that I'm saying "yes" and "no"

at the same time? ¹⁸But you can believe what God says, and He can tell you that what we say or write to you can't possibly mean "yes" and "no".

¹⁹After all, Silas, Timothy and I are the ones who brought you the good news about God's Son, Jesus Christ. And He certainly wasn't a "yes" and "no" man! No indeed! With Him it's always "yes", ²⁰because He is the "yes" to all of God's many promises. And therefore it's also through Jesus that we give God glory and honor when we say, "He speaks the truth".*

^{21b}God is the one who anointed* us for the work we're doing. ²²And when He did this, He also put His special mark on us by putting His Spirit in our hearts as the down payment or guarantee that we belong to Him. ^{21a}And God is also the one who keeps us firmly united with Christ, along with you.

²³And now I'm calling on God to be my witness, and to take away my life if I'm not telling the truth, when I say that I haven't come to Corinth yet because I don't want to hurt you. ²⁴And it's not true that we're trying to tell you what you must believe, because you're standing firm in your faith. No, we're all working together to make you happy.

² You see, I had made up my mind that I wasn't going to come to see you again with my heart filled with sorrow. ²After all, if I make you feel bad, who will there be to make me happy except the ones whom I have made sad? ³And so I wrote and told you this* so that when I do come, I won't have a lot of grief from the people who ought to make me happy, because I feel sure that when I'm happy, you will all be happy too. ⁴You see, I wrote you that letter with a heart that was greatly troubled and full of fear, and I shed a lot of tears as I wrote it. But I certainly didn't write it to make you feel bad. On the contrary, I wrote it so that you would realize how much I love you.

You Must Forgive the Man Who has Sinned

⁵Even if it's true that someone there has been the cause of a lot of grief,* he didn't hurt me. And I should say that some of you were hurt, since I don't want to exaggerate and say that all of you were hurt. ⁶But the punishment which most of you have given him is enough for a man like that. ⁷Now therefore you must do just the opposite and forgive this man. And then you must encourage and comfort him, so that he won't be destroyed by too much grief. ⁸Therefore I'm urging you to give him some sure proof that you love him.

⁹You see, this is one reason why I wrote that letter, to find out if you would pass the test and always be obedient.* ¹⁰And if you forgive a person for any sin, he has my forgiveness too, since my forgiveness would be done for your sakes, and with Christ's approval. ¹¹And I'm telling you to do this so that Satan won't get the best of us. For we certainly know what he's thinking.

After I Left Ephesus

¹²When I arrived in Troas to spread the Good News about Christ, the Lord had opened up the door for me to work there. ¹³But my heart was filled with worry and unrest, because I didn't find my brother Titus there. So I said "good-bye" to the people there and started out for Macedonia.

Christ's Power has Made Us Successful

¹⁴But God is always leading us who believe in Christ around like captives in His victory parade.* And I thank Him that as He does so, He uses us to spread the pleasant smell of His knowledge in every place we go. ¹⁵You see, we are the incense Christ offers to God among those who are being saved and those who are being destroyed. ¹⁶That is, for those who are being destroyed, we're the awful smell of death, bringing death; but for those who are being saved,

we're the sweet smell of life, bringing Life. And what man is really able to do a job like this? ¹⁷But we're not like so many people who are just peddling God's Word to make a profit for themselves. No indeed! What we say comes from pure hearts, like people who have come from God, and are speaking for Him using Christ's power.

We are the People of the New Agreement

³ Does it sound like we're beginning to tell you again about what wonderful people we are? No, we don't have to send you letters telling you what fine people we are, do we, like some people would do? And we don't need letters from you either, telling others what fine people we are.* ²After all, you people are our letter which tells what fine people we are, written in our hearts. And you're a letter which is known and always being read by everyone. ³You show very clearly that you are a letter which Christ has written, using us as His secretaries. And it wasn't written in ink, or on stone tablets. It was written by God's living Spirit in human hearts.

⁴And Christ gives us a wonderful feeling of confidence when we stand before God. ⁵It isn't the confidence that is based on ourselves, claiming that we are able to do something. No, our ability to do anything comes from God, ⁶who has made us able to work as servants of the new agreement.* And this isn't a written agreement, but the Spirit's agreement. You see, the written agreement kills people, but the Spirit makes them alive.

⁷The agreement that brings death was carved on pieces of stone, and God's shining heavenly beauty was so bright that the people of Israel couldn't look at Moses' face, because it was shining so brightly, even though its brightness was fading away by that time.

⁸And so the Spirit's agreement will certainly be a much more wonderful thing, will it not? ⁹After all, if the agreement that condemns people to eternal death was wonderful, how much more wonderful is the

agreement that makes people perfectly holy? * ¹⁰In other words, that which was wonderful in that partial way is no longer wonderful, because of something which is far more wonderful. ¹¹You see, since that which was fading away appeared in a wonderful way, that which lasts forever must be much more wonderful.

¹²And therefore since we have such a wonderful hope, we're very bold and confident. ¹³We're not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face, so that the people of Israel couldn't look at the last rays of his fading brightness. ¹⁴But their minds had turned to stone. And the truth is that this same veil is still there today when the old agreement is being read, because it's Christ who takes this veil away. ¹⁵Yes, even today there's a veil covering their minds whenever the writings of Moses are being read. ¹⁶"But when a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away". *

¹⁷Of course, in that verse the Lord is the Spirit, and there is freedom wherever the Lord's Spirit is present. ¹⁸But we have no veils on our faces. And it's just as though we're all looking at the Lord's shining heavenly beauty in a mirror. And as that shining heavenly beauty is being reflected back to us by the Lord's Spirit, it's changing us into that same image, day by day making us into ever more glorious creatures.

A Few Words about Our Work

⁴ Therefore since God took pity on us and gave us this work to do, we aren't discouraged. ⁵But at that time we made up our minds to have nothing to do with the shameful things people do in secret, since we don't live by underhanded tricks, and we don't mix in human errors to poison God's Word. But knowing that God is always watching us, we try to show every person's good conscience that we are His servants by telling people the truth.

³And if it's true that our Good News is still a secret, it's only a secret to those who are being destroyed. ⁴For the God of this world has blinded the minds of

those who don't believe, so that they can't see the bright light of the Good News which tells about the shining heavenly beauty of Christ, who is God's exact image.

⁵You see, we aren't giving you the news about what we have done, but what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. And He has made us your slaves. ⁶And the same God who said, "The light must now shine out of the darkness",* has caused His light to shine into our hearts to light them up with the knowledge of God's shining heavenly beauty, which we see in Christ's face.

We Do Everything for Your Benefit

⁷But we're keeping this treasure in common clay jars, so that it will be clear that this tremendous power belongs to God, and doesn't come from us. ⁸We have troubles on every side but we're not crushed. We're in doubt, but not in despair. ⁹People hate us and try to kill us, but we're not left without friends. We're being knocked about, but we're not being destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our bodies the deadly disease that brought about Jesus' death, so that Jesus' Life will also show itself in our bodies. ¹¹After all, we who are living are always facing death because of Jesus, so that Jesus' Life will also show itself in our dying bodies of flesh and blood. ¹²The result is that death is always working in us, but Life is always working in you.

¹³But we have the same spirit of faith that is described in the Bible, where it says, "I have come to believe, and therefore I have spoken".⁺ Yes, we also believe, and therefore we're also speaking, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised our Lord Jesus back to Life again will also raise us back to Life with Him, and make us stand, with you at our side, in His presence. ¹⁵You see, everything we do is done for your benefit,

⁺Verses quoted in 2 Corinthians are on page 878

so that as God's undeserved love spreads to more and more people, it will stir up a greater and greater chorus of thanksgiving, which will bring more glory and honor to God.

The Contents of Our Faith

16 But even if it's true that our outside shell is dying, it's also true that our inner self is always being made new day by day. And this is why we never get discouraged, **17** because our light load of trouble, which lasts for only a short time, is producing a tremendous amount of glory and honor for us that will last forever. It's greater than anything we can imagine. **18** And so we keep our eyes on the things we can't see instead of what we see, because the things we see last for just a short time, but the things we don't see last forever.

5 After all, we know that if* the tent* which is our house here on earth is taken down, we have an eternal house* in heaven that God is going to give us. And it's a house that no human hands have built. **2** And so while we're living in this tent, we're groaning because we're so anxious to get into our heavenly house, **3** since even if we leave our present house, we won't be left without a house. **4** And so like those who are living in a tent, we are groaning under our load of troubles, not because we want to get out of our present house, but because we want to get into our future house, so that the part of us which must die will be swallowed up by Life. **5** And God is the one who has prepared us for this wonderful change by giving us His Spirit as the guarantee that it will happen. **6** And this is why we're always filled with courage.

We also know that while we're at home in this body, we're away from home and separated from our Lord, **7** because we're living by faith, and not by what we see with our eyes. **8** And so we're full of courage. But we would be much happier if we could get away from this present body and be at home with our Lord. **9** Therefore our one aim is to please Him, whether we're at home with Him, or separated from Him. **10** For all of us will

have to appear publicly in front of Christ the Judge in his courtroom, so that each of us will get what he has coming, depending on the things we have done while we lived in this body, whether they were good or bad.

Our Lives are Controlled by Christ's Love

11Therefore since we know what it means to fear the Lord, we're trying to convince other people. But God knows exactly what kind of people we are, and I hope that deep down in your hearts you do too. **12**We aren't trying to tell you what fine people we are again,* but we're trying to do things that will give you an opportunity to brag about us a little, so that you will have an answer for those people who are always bragging about what they appear to be, instead of what they really are.

13You see, if we have lost our minds, we have given them to God; and if we're in our right minds, we're using them for you. **14**After all, it's our love for Christ which drives us on, because we have come to believe that one Man died for all people. And this means that everyone has died. **15**And He died for all people, so that those who are alive shouldn't live any longer for themselves, but for the one who died and was raised back to life again for them.

God Made Us His Friends and Filled Us with Life

16This means that from now on we won't have the usual kind of human relationships with anyone. Even if we once had an ordinary human relationship with Christ, we won't know Him in that way any longer. **17**What I'm saying is that if a person is in Christ,* he's a brand new creature. The old things are gone, and suddenly everything is new!

18And God has done it all. First He changed us from enemies into His friends through the work of Christ. And then He gave us the job of making others His friends also. **19**And we must tell them that God was making everybody in the whole world His friends by what Christ did,* and that He isn't counting their

sins against them any longer. And He has given us the message which tells people that God has made them His friends.

20 So now we're speaking as Christ's ambassadors, sent out to bring people His message. And it's just as though God was pleading with you, using our lips. Speaking for Christ then, we beg you to look upon God as your friend. **21** Christ never knew what it was to sin. But God made Him to be sin itself as our Substitute,* so that by what Christ did He could make us just as perfect and without sin as He is.*

6 And as God's fellow workers, we're begging you not to receive God's undeserved love in such a thoughtless way that it will do you no good. **2** Remember that God says,

"When the time came to hear, I heard you,
and when the day came to save, I helped you".⁺

But remember this! Now is the proper time for you to receive God's undeserved love! Yes, this is the day for you to be saved!*

We Always Try to be God's True Servants

3 And as we plead with you, we try not to do anything that will in any way keep anyone from coming to God, so that no one will find fault with our work. **4** Instead, we're always trying to show by everything we do that we're God's servants by the patient way we hold on to our faith in troubles, hardships and difficulties. **5** We have been beaten, thrown in jail, and attacked by angry mobs. We have been worn out by hard labor, lack of sleep, and hunger.* But through it all we haven't given up our faith. **6** We have tried to show that we're God's servants by the purity of our lives, by our knowledge, and our patience and kindness in dealing with others. The Holy Spirit also tells people that we're God's servants. And so does our genuine Christian love,* **7** and the fact that we speak the truth, and God's power, which is seen in our lives. You can also see that we're His servants by the good things we do. And these are the weapons we use to attack and defend

ourselves against our enemies. ⁸The fact that we're honored and dishonored, cursed and praised also shows that we're His servants. People call us liars, but we speak the truth. ⁹They say we're nobodies, but everybody knows who we are. We're dying, but the amazing thing is that we keep on living. We're being punished, but we're not being killed. ¹⁰We're sad, but we're always happy. We're poor, but we're making many people rich. We have nothing, and yet we own everything.

¹¹We have spoken plainly and openly to you people in Corinth, telling you everything; and you have a big place in our hearts. ¹²So it isn't that you have a small place in our hearts, but that you have a small place in your hearts for us. ¹³And I'm writing now as though you were children. You must give in the same measure that you receive. You must give us a big place in your hearts.

We Christians are God's Temple

¹⁴You must never be joined together as partners with people who are unbelievers. After all, what do right and wrong have in common? Or how can light and darkness live together? ¹⁵And how can Christ agree with the Devil? Or how can a believer and an unbeliever agree on anything? ¹⁶And what agreement can there be between God's temple and an idol's temple? For we, of course, are the temple of the living God, just as God has said,

"I will make My home among them
and live with them.

I will be their God,
and they will be My people".⁺

¹⁷Therefore "You must stay away from unbelievers
and be separate," says the Lord;

"and you mustn't touch anything which is unclean.
and then I will take you into My presence",^{*}

¹⁸and "I will be your Father,
and" you will be "My sons" and daughters,
"says the almighty Lord".^{*}

7 And so my dear friends, since we have these promises, we must make ourselves clean, and get rid of everything that will soil or stain our body or soul. And in our fear and respect for God we must try to become perfectly holy.

You Have Made Me Very Happy

2 Give us a place in your hearts. We have never done anyone any wrong. We have never hurt anyone. We have never taken advantage of anyone. **3** I'm not saying this to condemn you, because I have already told you that you have such a place in our hearts that we want to die together and live together with you.*

4 I have great confidence in you, and I talk about you with great pride. In all our troubles I'm always full of courage, and my heart is always overflowing with joy.

5 You see, when we got to Macedonia, we didn't find any rest or peace of mind for our old sinful bodies.* We ran into trouble from every direction. There were fights and quarrels all around us, and our hearts were filled with fear.

6 But when life gets us down, our God always picks us up; and He filled us with new courage when Titus arrived. **7** But it wasn't just the fact that he arrived. It was also the encouragement you had given him while he was there with you. He told us that you really want to see us, and how sorry you are, and how much you really care for me; and all this made me very happy.

8 You see, even if I made you feel bad by writing that letter,* I'm not sorry I wrote it. I realize now that it did make you feel bad, but it was only for a little while. And even if I had been sorry then, **9** I'm happy now, not because I made you feel bad, but because you were made to feel so bad that you became sorry for what you did and had a real change of heart and mind. You see, your heart was filled with the kind of sorrow God wants people to have. So we didn't really hurt you in any way. **10** You see, the kind of

sorrow God wants people to have causes a person to change his mind and his way of living, so that he will be saved. And nobody will ever be sorry about that. But the world's kind of sorrow brings death.

¹¹But now look at this kind of sorrow God wants people to have, and see how eager and earnest it has made you, how eager to show that you are innocent, and how disgusted you are with yourselves. See what fear it produced in your hearts, what longings, what enthusiasm and eagerness to see that everyone is treated fairly. In every respect you have shown that your hands are clean in this matter.*

¹²You see, even though I wrote you that letter, I didn't do it because of the man who did wrong, or because of the one who was hurt. I wrote it because I wanted you to discover for yourselves, in God's sight, how loyal you are to us. ¹³And this is why we are now so much encouraged.

And besides being encouraged, we were filled with even greater joy when we saw how happy Titus was, because you had all made him feel so much better. ¹⁴The fact is that I had bragged a little to Titus about you people, but you haven't made me ashamed of anything I said. On the contrary, just as everything we have ever said to you is true, so everything we bragged about to Titus turned out to be true. ¹⁵And now his love for you is greater than ever, as he remembers how obedient you all were, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I'm glad now that I can depend on you completely.

The Collection for the People in Judea*

⁸Next, brothers and sisters, we want to tell you about the gift which God in His love has given to the people in the churches of Macedonia. ²I must tell you that they have been severely tested by troubles. But even though they're extremely poor, their tremendous joy has overflowed in a great outpouring of gifts. ^{3a}I'm telling you the truth when I say that ⁴they begged

us to give them the privilege of taking part in the collection that will be sent to help God's people.*

3b And then of their own free will they gave what they could afford, and even something beyond that. **5** And the way they did this was more than we expected. First they gave themselves to the Lord, and then they did what God wanted and gave themselves to us.

6 Therefore we urged Titus to finish up this gift of love among you, since he was the one who began this work there. **7** You are so rich in every way - in your faith, in the way you speak, in your knowledge, in your eagerness to serve, and in your Christian love, which we planted in your hearts. And therefore you can also do a fine job in this collection.

8 I'm not giving you any orders, but I'm using the eagerness of others to see how genuine your Christian love is. **9** After all, you know all about the undeserved love of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know that even though He was rich, He became poor for your sakes, so that by His poverty you could become rich.

10 And now I'm going to tell you what I think you should do about this collection. You see, you people were the first ones to say that you wanted to give something. That was a year ago. And you were also the first ones to give anything. And so now the best thing for you **11** to do is to finish the job. You really wanted to get started. Now you must be just as eager to finish it up by giving whatever you have to give. **12** You see, if the desire to give is there, God accepts a person's gift on the basis of what he has.* He doesn't expect a person to give what he doesn't have.

13 After all, I'm not trying to relieve the sufferings of others by making you suffer. I want everyone to suffer or prosper equally. **14** At this present time you have more than you need, and they don't have enough. So your extra money should go to supply what they lack, so that when they have more than they need, and you don't have enough, their money will go to supply what you lack. In that way everyone will have

an equal amount. ¹⁵This is what the Bible says,
"The one who picked up a lot
didn't have too much,
and the one who picked up a small amount
didn't have too little".⁺

The Men We're Going to Send

¹⁶I also thank God for filling Titus' heart with that same kind of eager concern to help you. ¹⁷Because when we asked him to go, he was already so eager to go that he started off to see you of his own free will. ¹⁸And along with him we have sent our brother who is praised and honored in all the churches for his work in spreading the Good News.* ¹⁹However it wasn't just our idea to send him. The fact is that he has been elected by the churches to travel along with us, as we bring this gift that we have collected. It's a gift that will bring glory and honor to our Lord, and show our eagerness to help. ²⁰We're traveling together like this so that no one will find any fault with the way we're handling this very generous gift. ²¹You see, we always make it our aim to do things that are good in the Lord's sight and in the sight of other people also.

²²We have also sent another one of our brothers along with them.* This man has been tested many times in many situations, and we have always found him to be eager to help. And right now he's all the more eager to help because he has such great confidence in you. ²³I should also tell you that Titus is my partner who is always working with me to help you. And the rest of our brothers have been sent out by the other churches. They're all bringing glory and honor to Christ. ²⁴Therefore I want you to give them some proof of your love, so that all the churches can see why we boasted about you.

Your Gift Should be a Real Thankoffering

⁹ It really isn't necessary for me to be writing to you about the help we're sending to God's people.* ²You

see, I know how eager you are to help. In fact, I'm boasting about your eagerness to the people in Macedonia.* I tell them that the people in Achaia have been ready for a whole year. And your enthusiasm has gotten most of the people here all stirred up.

³But I have sent our brothers so that you will be all ready, just as I have been telling them, and so that our boasting about you in this matter won't turn out to be empty words. ⁴I don't want the people from Macedonia to come with me and find you not ready. If that happens, we will really be ashamed of being so confident, and I wouldn't want to say how ashamed you would be. ⁵And this is why I thought it was necessary to urge these brothers to go on to Corinth ahead of me and get your promised thankoffering ready ahead of time. Then it will be all ready when I get there, and it will be a real thankoffering, and not something you have been forced to give.

⁶But you must remember this -

"The man who sows just a few seeds
will gather in a small crop;
but the man who sows a lot of seeds
will gather in a big crop".⁺

⁷Every person must make up his own mind ahead of time what he's going to give. And he mustn't give it with a sad heart, or because he feels he's being forced to give. After all, God loves the one who gives gladly. ⁸And God is able to give you more than you need of every divine gift, so that in every situation you will always have everything you need, and enough left over for every good work, ⁹just as the Bible says -

"He scatters His gifts; He gives to the poor.

He keeps on doing good things forever".⁺

¹⁰And so the one who "keeps on supplying seed to the farmer," and bread for food,* will supply you with "seed" in great abundance. Yes, He will make your desire to do what is right grow into a rich harvest of good works. ¹¹He will make you rich in every way, so that you can always be generous, and people

will thank God as we distribute your generous gift^{*} ¹²(And we know that) it will do more than just supply God's people with the things they need. It will also bring God a great chorus of thanksgiving from many people. ¹³And this service of yours will prove (to God's people that your Christian love) is genuine. And so they will praise God for the way the Good News about Christ has taken over your lives and everything you do, and for the generous way you have shared what you have with them and with all the others. ¹⁴And in their prayers for you their hearts will reach out to you because of the great abundance of God's undeserved love which He has poured out upon you. ¹⁵Yes, we must thank God for His gift which no words can describe^{*}

I Must Defend Myself and My Rights as an Apostle

¹⁰^{*}. . . . This is Paul speaking to you, the man who is so wishy-washy when he's there with you, but talks so big and tough when he's not there. And I'm asking you to do something for me with all the gentleness and kindness of Christ. ²I'm also praying that when I get there, I won't be big and tough with you. But I'm sure I'll have plenty of courage when I face those people who think we're living like sinful human beings.

³Of course we have a sinful mind and body,^{*} but we don't fight our battles the way sinful human beings do. ⁴You see, the weapons we use in our battle are not the kind used by sinful human beings, but with God's help they are powerful enough to tear down fortresses. With these weapons we destroy arguments, ⁵and tear down every high and lofty thought that doesn't agree with the knowledge that comes from God. And as we do so we're always trying to bring every thought under control, and make it obedient to Christ. ⁶And we're always ready to punish every act of disobedience whenever you become completely obedient.^{*}

⁷Look at the plain facts. If it's true that someone there really believes that he belongs to Christ, he must do some more thinking about this and realize that we belong to Christ just as much as he does. ⁸You see, we were to use the authority our Lord gave us to build you up, not tear you down. And I won't ever be ashamed even if I brag a little too much about that authority.

⁹But I don't want you to think I'm trying to frighten you by my letters, ¹⁰because I know people are saying, "His letters are full of big words and strong language, but when you see him in person, he's just a weakling, and what he says doesn't amount to anything." ¹¹Anyone who says such things must keep in mind that when we get there, we're going to act like the same kind of people our letters say we are.

¹²Of course, we don't dare to put ourselves in the same class or compare ourselves with certain people who speak so highly of themselves. But people like that, who make up their own standards of success and then measure themselves by their own standards, are simply ignorant people.

¹³But we won't let our bragging go too far. Instead, we'll keep it within the limits of the field of work God has given to us, which also includes you people in Corinth. ¹⁴And so you see, we aren't going beyond our authority now (like people who have never been to Corinth), because we were the first ones to come to you with the Good News about Christ. ¹⁵And we aren't letting our bragging go too far by bragging about other people's work. But we hope that as your faith continues to grow, you will help us become even more successful in our field of work there in your midst, ¹⁶so that we can spread the Good News in those parts of the world that lie beyond your city. And we hope that we will never brag about things that have already been done in someone else's field.

¹⁷And so "the person who brags must brag about what the Lord has done".⁺ ¹⁸After all, the person

who gets the real seal of approval isn't the one who speaks so highly of himself, but the one of whom the Lord speaks highly.

I Must Warn You about These False Apostles

11 Oh how I wish that you would put up with a little bit of my foolishness! And so I'm saying, "Please try to put up with me!" **2**You see, I have the same jealous love for you that God does. After all, I made the arrangements to introduce you, as a pure young girl, to one special Man - to Christ - to be His bride. **3**But I'm afraid that your minds may have been poisoned and led astray from your sincere and pure love for Christ, in the same way that the Serpent fooled Eve by his clever trick. **4**For you put up with it wonderfully well when someone comes along and brings you news about another Jesus than the one we told you about, or when you receive a different kind of spirit than the one you received from us, or a completely different kind of Good News than you got from us. **5**You see, I don't think these super-great apostles are better than me in any way. **6**Even though I have never been trained to speak in public, I'm not untrained in knowledge.* In fact, we have made this clear to you many times in every way.

7Did I do something wrong when I took a low place so that you could have a high place, and brought you the Good News about God as a completely free gift? **8**I robbed other churches by taking pay from them, so that I could help you. **9**And when I was living there with you and ran short of money, I was never a burden to anyone, because when our brothers came from Macedonia, they brought me what I needed. So I have kept myself from being a burden to you people in any way, and I'm going to keep on doing that.

10Christ's truth is surely in my heart when I say that no one in the province of Achaia can ever stop me from bragging like this. **11**And why do I brag like this? Is it because I don't love you? God knows I do.

12And I'm going to keep on doing things just the way I've always done, so that those people who want to brag to you about being just like us won't have any ground to stand on.

13You see, men who say things like this are false apostles. They are dishonest workmen who are trying to dress themselves up to look like Christ's apostles.

14And there's nothing unusual about this. After all, Satan himself is always dressing up to look like an angel of light. **15**It's no great surprise therefore if Satan's servants also dress themselves up like servants who are trying to do what God says is right. But in the end they'll get exactly what they deserve for the things they're doing.

Let Me Give You My Credentials

16I'm telling you once more that no one of you must think that I'm a fool. But if you do, at least take me into your hearts as a fool, so that I can also have a little something to brag about. **17**And when I brag so confidently, I won't be talking the way our Lord would ever talk, but in this boastful feeling that I'm right, I'll be talking like a fool.

18Since a lot of people are bragging the way sinful human beings do, I'm going to do the same thing. **19**You see, since you people are so wise, you gladly put up with fools. **20**After all, you put up with it if someone makes you his slaves, or takes your property, or takes advantage of you, or treats you like dirt, or slaps you in the face. **21**I'm ashamed to say that we are too timid to do such things. But I have the courage to brag about whatever anyone else dares to brag about.

Now I'm talking like a fool. **22**Are they real Jews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they children of Abraham? So am I. **23**Are they Christ's servants? Now I'm talking like a crazy man. I'm a super-servant. You see, I have worked much harder. I have been in jail more often. I have been beaten and whipped many more times than anyone else.

I have been close to death many times. ²⁴Five times the Jews have given me the thirty-nine lashes with the whip. ²⁵Three times I have been beaten with rods. Once the Jews tried to kill me with stones. I have been shipwrecked three times, and once I was in the water for a whole night and day.

²⁶I have made many trips, and have been in danger many times while I was traveling on rivers and on the ocean, and when I was in the city and in the wilderness. My life has been threatened by robbers, by my own countrymen, by the people of the other nations,* and by false brothers.

²⁷I have worked so hard that I was all worn out. Many nights I have gone without sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty, many times with no food at all. I have been cold and without clothes to keep me warm.

²⁸And besides these physical sufferings, there is always my daily burden, my worry about all my churches. ²⁹When anyone in my churches is weak, I become weak too. When anyone stumbles and falls into sin, my heart burns with pain and grief.

³⁰Since I must brag, I'm going to brag about the things that show how weak I am. ³¹Our God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus, is the one we must praise forever and ever, and He knows that I'm not lying. ³²When I was in Damascus, the Governor appointed by King Aretas put guards at all the city gates to arrest me; ³³but I slipped through his hands by having my friends lower me to the ground in a basket from a window in the wall.*

¹²I must keep on bragging. It isn't going to do any good, but I'm going to talk now about the times when I have seen the Lord, and the things He has revealed to me.

²I know a man in Christ* who was taken up into the third heaven* fourteen years ago. I don't know whether he was taken there in a bodily way or not. Only God knows that. ^{3a}And I know that this man

⁴was taken up into Paradise, and heard things which can't be put into human words, and which no human being can talk about. ^{3b}I don't know whether he heard all this in a bodily way or not. Only God knows that. ⁵I'll brag about a man like that, but I won't brag about myself, except about my weaknesses.

⁶You see, if I want to brag, I won't be a fool, because I'll be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to think I'm any bigger or better than he thinks I am when he sees me or hears me talk. ⁷But because these things God revealed to me were so wonderful, He did something to my body which gives me great pain,* so that I wouldn't get to thinking I'm too high and mighty. It's like having one of Satan's angels inside of me, who keeps on torturing me. ⁸I have pleaded with the Lord three times about this, asking Him to take it away from me. ⁹But He always says to me, "My undeserved love is all you need. You see, My power works best in someone who is weak."

So I'll be most happy to brag even more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power will fill me completely. ¹⁰This is why I'm so happy when I think about my weaknesses, and how I have been mistreated and insulted, and my troubles and difficulties, and the terrible things people have done to me because of Christ. You see, the time when I'm strong is when I'm weak.

I'm Concerned about You

¹¹I have acted like a fool, but you people forced me to do it. You see, you ought to be speaking very highly of me, because even if I'm nothing, these super-great apostles aren't better than me in any way. ¹²I worked among you with great patience, doing signs and wonderful things and miracles which prove that I'm an apostle.* ¹³But in what way did I treat you worse than the rest of the churches, except for the fact that I was the man who never was a burden to you? Please forgive me for being so unfair!

14Don't forget that I'm all ready to come and see you for the third time, and I won't be a burden to you. You see, I don't want your money; I want you. After all, children don't have to save up money for their parents. It's the parents who must save up money for their children. **15**And I'm telling you that I will be most happy to spend my money, and my talents, and my strength for your sakes. But can it be that you love me less because I love you so very much?

16We must agree then, that I'm one apostle who has never been a burden to you. But is it true that I'm just a clever fellow who has taken advantage of you by my underhanded tricks? **17**I haven't taken advantage of you through any of the men I sent to you, have I? **18**Once I urged Titus to go and sent our brother* along with him. He didn't take advantage of you, did he? Didn't we both act in the same spirit? Didn't we both do things in the same way?

19Have you been thinking all this time that we're trying to defend ourselves in your sight? No, we're speaking by the power of Christ, just as though we were standing in God's presence. And everything we have said, my dear friends, has been said to build you up and make you better Christians.

20You see, I'm afraid that when I come to Corinth I may not find you to be the kind of people I want you to be, and that you may not find me to be the kind of man you want me to be. I'm afraid that I may find quarreling and jealousy there, and people who are angry with each other, and filled with selfish ambition, saying hurtful things and gossiping about each other, puffed up with pride, and everything in confusion. **21**I'm afraid that when I come back again my God may make me ashamed of you, and that I will be sad when I see many of you still living in your old sinful ways, and not feeling sorry for the unclean things you have done, your sexual sins and things that lead to such sins.

This will be my third visit there in Corinth. And **13** the Bible says that "every case must be decided by the testimony of two or three witnesses".⁺ **2**I told you this before, when I was there on my second visit. And now that I'm not there, I'm giving an advance warning to those people who are still living in their old sinful ways, and all the rest of you as well. If I come back again, I won't let the guilty people go unpunished. **3**I'm telling you this since you're looking for proof that Christ is speaking through me. And He isn't weak when He deals with you. No, indeed. He's powerful when He's in your midst. **4**It's true that He was put on a cross because of His weakness; but now He's living by God's power. It's also true that we who are in Him* are weak, but we shall also be living with Him by God's power when we get to Corinth.

Final Instructions and Greetings

5You must keep on testing yourselves to see if you're still believers. Yes, you must examine yourselves carefully. You surely know yourselves well enough, don't you, to know that Christ Jesus is living in you?* Of course if He isn't, you aren't Christians at all.

6I'm also hoping that you will realize that we are real apostles. **7**And we're always praying to our God that you won't do anything wrong, but we are not trying to prove that we are real apostles. We're praying that you will do the right thing, even though we may not seem to be real apostles. **8**After all, we can't do anything against the truth. Instead, we must always be working for the truth.

9You see, we're always happy whenever we are weak, and you are strong. In fact, this is what we keep on praying for, that you will be perfect. **10** And this is why I'm writing this letter while I'm still here, so that when I get there, I won't have to be tough in using the authority my Lord gave me. You see, He gave me this authority to build you up and make you better Christians, not to tear you down.

11Finally then, my brothers and sisters, I'll say good-bye. Try to be perfect! Listen to my requests! Be perfectly agreed in everything! Live in peace! And our God who fills us with Christian love and peace will be with you. **12**Greet one another with a holy kiss. All of God's people* send you their greetings.

13I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ALONG WITH GOD'S LOVE, AND ALSO YOUR CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT!*

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCHES IN GALATIA

(Written from Antioch in 50 A.D.)*

1 ^{1a}This letter is from the apostle Paul ²and all the brothers who are with me.

And I'm writing to the churches in the province of Galatia.*

^{1b}I wasn't sent out by any man or group of men, or appointed to be an apostle by any man. I was appointed by Jesus Christ, and by God, His Father, who raised Him from the dead.

³God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love that no one deserves, and their peace.*

⁴And Jesus is the one who gave Himself for our sins, so that He could rescue us from this present evil world, just as God our Father wanted and planned. ⁵Therefore the glory and honor belong to God forever and ever. Yes, it really does!

Turning to a False Gospel is Turning away from God!

⁶I can't believe that you are turning away so quickly from the one who called you by the undeserved love of Christ, and are turning to a different kind of "good news". ⁷It really isn't another message of Good News at all. But there are some people who want to change the Good News about Christ into something else, and these people are getting you all mixed up.

⁸But even if we ourselves, or an angel from heaven, were to bring you a message of "good news" which is different from the one we have already brought to you, that person has to be under God's curse to be destroyed. ⁹We have said it before, and now I'm

* Helpful notes for Galatians begin on page 827

saying it again. If anyone is bringing you a message of "good news" which is different from the message you received from us, that person has to be under God's curse to be destroyed.

10Does this sound like I'm trying to be the best-liked man in town? Or does it sound like I want God to like me? Does it sound like I'm trying to please people? If it's true that I'm still trying to please people, I wouldn't be Christ's slave.

How I Became an Apostle

11You see, brothers and sisters, I want to tell you something about this Good News I have been telling people about. It isn't the usual kind of news, **12**because I didn't get it from any human being, and I didn't learn it from any human teacher.* It was shown to me in a special way by Jesus Christ.*

13After all, you have heard about the way I used to live when I was following the Jewish religion. You know that I fought like a crazy man against God's Church and tried to destroy it.* **14**And you know that I got farther ahead in the Jewish religion than most of the other Jews my own age, because I had a much greater love for the things that were handed down to us by my forefathers.*

15But God chose me to be an apostle before I was ever born; and when He decided the right time had come, He called me because of His love that no one deserves. **16**And He showed me all about His Son in a special way, so that I could spread the Good News about Him among the people of the other nations.*

And when He did this, I didn't go right away to talk it over with any other person. **17**I didn't go up to Jerusalem either, to see the men who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went off to Arabia, and then I went back to Damascus.*

18Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem

to get acquainted with Peter, and I stayed there with him for fifteen days. ¹⁹But I didn't see a single one of the other apostles. But I did see James, the Lord's brother.* ²⁰And I swear before God that I'm not lying when I write to you about these things.

²¹After my visit in Jerusalem I went to the provinces of Syria and Cilicia,* ²²and during this time the Christian churches in Judea never saw my face. ²³However they kept on hearing that "the man who was hunting us down like animals a little while ago is now spreading the Good News about the faith which he was once trying to destroy." ²⁴And they were praising God because of me.

The Other Apostles Accepted Me

² Then after fourteen years I went up to Jerusalem again with Barnabas,* and I also took Titus along with me. ²That time I went because God showed me in a special way that I should go. And I had a private meeting with the leaders, and told them the Good News that I'm telling the people of the other nations.* I did this to make sure that my work, both past and present, hadn't all been a waste of time.

³I must explain that Titus, who had come with me, was a Greek; but they didn't say he had to be circumcised.* ⁴However we talked about this because of some false brothers who had gotten into the Church without anyone knowing about it. They had sneaked in to act as spies and find out all they could about the freedom we have because of what Christ Jesus has done for us. They were trying to make us slaves, ⁵but we didn't give in to them or let them tell us what to do for even one moment, so that you could also have the truth of the Good News.

⁶Remember that the men I was talking to were recognized as the leaders of the Church. Whatever kind of men they used to be* doesn't make any difference

to me at all. God doesn't judge a person by his outward appearance. But those leaders didn't give me any new information or make any suggestions at all. ⁷But they did see that God had given me the job of bringing the Good News to the people who aren't circumcised, just as He had given Peter the job of bringing the Good News to those who are circumcised. ⁸In other words, the one who gave Peter the power to be an apostle to those who are circumcised also gave me the power to be an apostle to the people of the other nations.

⁹I should add that James, Peter and John were the ones who were recognized as the real leaders. And when they saw how God had poured out His undeserved love on me, they shook hands with me and Barnabas, and accepted us as members of their group, with the agreement that we should go to the people of the other nations, and they would go to those who are circumcised. ¹⁰The only thing they asked was that we should remember the poor, and this is one thing I have really tried to do.*

Once I Had to Tell Peter He was Wrong

¹¹Later, when Peter came to Antioch, he did something wrong, and I had to tell him so right to his face. ¹²You see, when he first got there, he was eating with people who weren't Jews.* But then some men arrived who had been sent by James. And when they got there, Peter began to act differently and wouldn't have anything to do with the people who weren't Jews, because he was afraid of those who believed that all believers have to be circumcised.* ¹³Then the rest of the Jews in Antioch also followed Peter and began to act like hypocrites, pretending that they wouldn't have anything to do with people who weren't Jews either. And finally even Barnabas was led astray by their two-faced behavior.

¹⁴But I saw that they weren't acting like people who know and accept the truth which the Good News brings us. So I said to Peter right in front of them

all, "You happen to be a Jew, but you aren't living now the way the Jews live. You're living like the people of the other nations live.* So how can you try to force these people who aren't Jews to live the way the Jews live?

15"You and I are Jews by birth. We're not 'sinners from the other nations'.* **16**But we know that God doesn't accept a person as perfectly holy because of the things he has done in an effort to keep the Law, but only through his faith in Jesus Christ.* And so we also have put our faith in Christ Jesus, so that God will accept us as perfectly holy through faith in Christ, and not because of the things we have done in an effort to keep the Law. Because 'God will never accept any person as perfectly holy'[†] because of the things he does in an effort to keep the Law."

We Have Died, and Yet We Live

17But now someone may say, "Yes, but if it's true that we're hoping that God will accept us as perfectly holy because of Christ, and if at the same time it's clear that we're also sinners, then isn't Christ saying that sinning isn't really such a bad thing?" No, we could never say that!

18You see, if it's true that I'm now rebuilding the things I have already torn down, I'm agreeing that I have broken the Law. **19**And the truth is[†] that I have already died because of the Law. And thus so far as the Law is concerned, I'm dead, so that I can live for God. Yes, I was put on that cross with Christ. **20**So it isn't really I who am living any longer, but it's Christ who is living in me.* And the life I'm living now in this sinful body* is something I'm living by faith - faith in God's Son who loved me and gave Himself for me.

21I'm certainly not saying that we don't need God's undeserved love. But it's true that if we can be accepted as perfectly holy through any kind of law, there was

[†]Verses quoted in Galatians are on page 878

no reason at all for Christ to die.

Are We Saved by What We Do, or by Faith?

3 Oh what stupid people you Galatians are! What hypnotist has put his "evil eye" on you? The picture of Jesus Christ hanging on a cross was clearly painted right before your eyes. **2**And I want to ask you just one thing. Did you receive the Spirit because of the things you did in an effort to keep the Law, or because you believed our message?

3Are you so stupid? You started out by the power of the Spirit. Are you now trying to finish up by your own sinful mind and body? **4**Haven't you learned anything at all from all the things that have happened to you? Is that possible?

5So let me ask you, do you think God gives you His Spirit and works miracles among you as the result of the things you have done in an effort to keep the Law, or because you believe our message?

6It's the same with you as it was with Abraham. "He believed God, and God gave him credit for being perfectly holy".*⁺ **7**And you certainly know that it's the people who have faith who are Abraham's real children. **8**For God knew from eternity that He would accept the people of the other nations* as perfectly holy by bringing them to faith. So He made that first announcement of the Good News to Abraham, when He said, "I will use you to bring My blessing to all the nations".⁺ **9**And so it's true that the people who have faith receive the same blessing from God that Abraham, the man of faith, received.

10You see, God's curse lies on all those who depend on the things they do in an effort to keep the Law. For this is what the Bible says - "God's curse lies on every person who doesn't keep on doing all the things that are written in the Book of the Law".⁺ **11**And it's clear that no person will ever be accepted as perfectly holy in God's sight by keeping the Law, because "the person who will live is the one whom God has accepted as perfectly holy by bringing him to faith".⁺

12And the Law has nothing to do with faith. No, the Law says, "The person who does these things will live by doing them".⁺

13But Christ paid our ransom price* and set us free from the curse of the Law when He took our curse on Himself. For this is what the Bible says - "God's curse lies on every person who is hung on a tree".⁺

14And Christ Jesus hung on that tree so that God could give the same blessing He promised Abraham to the people of the other nations. And the result is that we can now receive the Spirit God promised us when He brings us to faith.

God's Law and God's Promise

15My dear brothers and sisters, I'm going to use an illustration from everyday life. When a man makes a will and has it witnessed and notarized to make it a binding contract, no one breaks that will or changes it in any way, even though it's only a human contract.

16But God made these promises to Abraham, and to his Descendant. But He didn't say, "and to your descendants", talking about many people. He said, "and to your Descendant",⁺ talking about one Descendant, and that one Descendant was Christ.

17And what I'm saying is that when God makes an agreement* and witnesses and notarizes it Himself, no law is going to come along 430 years later and break that agreement so as to break God's promise!

18You see, if the things we're going to receive from our Father come to us through the Law, then they can't come to us any longer through His promise. But God gave Abraham his inheritance as a free gift through His promise.

19Why then did God give the Law? It was added because of all the wrong things the people of Israel were doing. God gave it to some angels, who placed it in the hands of a middleman; and it was to remain in force until that promised Descendant was born.

20But when one person makes a contract, there is

no middleman; and God, who made that promise, is one person.

The Law was Our Guardian until Christ Came

21Does this mean that the Law works against God's promises? No, that could never be! After all, if God had given a law that could give us Life, then keeping the Law would certainly be the way for us to become perfectly holy in God's sight. **22**But the Bible says that everything in the whole world is under the power of sin, so that God's promise can be given to those who believe, as the result of their faith in Jesus Christ.

23And so before we came to faith, the Law kept us locked up as prisoners, until God told us about this faith that would come to us. **24**Therefore until Christ came, the Law was our guardian* which God placed over us, so that He could then accept us as perfectly holy by bringing us to faith. **25**And now that we have been brought to faith, we aren't under a guardian any longer.

26You see, all of you people are God's children in the full sense* through your faith in Christ Jesus. **27**For all of you who have been baptized into Christ have wrapped Christ around you like a cloak, so that God sees only Christ when He looks at you. **28**And so there's no way that you people can still be Jews or Greeks, slaves or free people, men or women, because being in Christ Jesus* you people are all one.* **29**And since you belong to Christ, you're also Abraham's children. And you're going to receive whatever God has set aside to give to His children, just as He has promised.

4 But I'm saying that as long as the child who is going to receive his father's property is a child, he's no different from a slave, even though he really owns everything. **2**He must obey his guardians and the men appointed to manage his property, until the date set by his father.

3That's the way it was with us also. When we were children, we lived like slaves whose lives are controlled

by the basic laws which govern our lives in this world.*
4But when the time God had set finally came, God sent out His Son. A woman brought Him into the world,* which put Him under the Law, **5**so that He could pay the ransom price for all those who were living as slaves under the Law and set them free. And then God could adopt us as His children in the full sense.* **6**And because you're His children in the full sense, God sent His Son's Spirit into your hearts, and that Spirit is always making us call out, "Abba", which means "our Father". **7**And this means that you aren't a slave any longer, but a child in the full sense. And since you're a child in the full sense, you're one of those who will receive the things God has set aside to give to His children.

I'm Worried About You

8In the past, however, when you didn't know anything about God, you lived as slaves of things that aren't really gods at all. **9**But now that you have come to know God, or rather now that God has come to know you, how can you be turning back again to those weak and worthless things? Do you want to become slaves of those things all over again?

10I say this because now you're celebrating special days and months and seasons and years.* **11**And I'm worried about you. I'm afraid that all the hard work I did for you has been wasted.

12I'm begging you, my brothers and sisters, try to be like me, because I have become like you. You haven't done me any wrong in any way. **13**You must remember that I brought you the Good News the first time because I was sick. **14**And even though my illness was a great trial for you, you didn't treat me as though I was some worthless beggar and throw me out, but you took me in, just as if I was one of God's angels, just as if I was Christ Jesus Himself. **15**What has become of your desire to make me happy? For I know it's true that you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me, if that had been possible. **16**Has it come to this, that I am now your enemy because I'm telling

you the truth?

17These other teachers who are running after you have an evil purpose in mind. They want to separate you from us, so that you will run after them. **18**Of course it's nice to have someone running after you for a good purpose. That's the way I always feel, and not only when I'm there with you.

19My little children, once again I'm suffering great pains because of you, like a mother does when her child is being born. And my pains will continue until the time that you become like Christ. **20**How I wish I was there with you right now and could change my tone of voice, because you've brought me to the place where I don't know what to do.

The Story of Hagar and Sarah

21Tell me something, you people who want to live under the Law. Aren't you listening to that Law? **22**You see, the Bible says that Abraham had two sons. One was the son of a slave girl, and the other was the son of a free woman. **23**That slave girl's child was born in the ordinary way,* but the free woman's son was born as the result of God's promise.*

24This is what we call picture language. You see, these women are pictures of two agreements. One of them came to us from Mt. Sinai, and the children of this agreement are slaves when they're born. This is the picture Hagar gives us. **25**In fact, Mt. Sinai is called "Hagar" in Arabia. And this is a picture of the present city of Jerusalem. She's a slave, and so are her children.*

26But the heavenly Jerusalem is free, and this is our mother. **27**For the Bible says,

"The barren woman, who has never had any children,
is the one who must celebrate and be happy.

The woman who has never felt the pains of childbirth
is the one who must raise her voice and shout.

Because the barren woman will have many more children
than the woman who has a husband".⁺

28And you, my brothers and sisters, are children born as the result of a promise, just like Isaac was. **29**But in Isaac's time the child who was born in the ordinary way tried to kill the child who was born by the Spirit's work. And the same thing is happening today.

30But what does the Bible say? "Throw out that slave girl and her son! For your property will go to the son of the free woman, and the slave girl's son will never receive any part of it."[†] **31**And so my brothers and sisters, we aren't children of a slave girl. We're children of a free woman.

Christ has Set Us Free from the Law

5 Christ has set us free, because He wants us to be free. And therefore you must stand firm, and not let anyone put a yoke on your necks and make you slaves again.

2Remember that this is Paul talking to you now, and I'm telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised,* Christ won't do you any good at all. **3**Yes, I'm telling the truth when I remind every man who lets himself be circumcised that it is then his God-given duty to keep the whole Law. **4**And all you people who are trying to be perfectly holy in God's sight by doing what the Law says have cut yourselves off from Christ and have fallen outside the reach of God's undeserved love.

5But we Christians are eagerly waiting to actually have that long hoped for perfect holiness which the Spirit has already given us by faith. **6**You see, if a person is in Christ Jesus,* being circumcised doesn't do anything for him, and not being circumcised doesn't do anything either. But having a faith which is always kept working by Christian love really does something for a person.

7You were running a good race. Who stopped you from following the truth? **8**Whoever is urging you to do this certainly isn't our God who is calling you

to be His people. ⁹You know that just a little bit of yeast spreads through the whole batch of dough.

¹⁰But the Lord has made me sure that you people aren't going to follow any other wrong ideas, and that the man who is getting you all upset, whoever he is, will be punished.

¹¹But talking about myself, my brothers and sisters, if it's true that I'm still telling people that they must be circumcised, why are the Jews still trying to kill me? If that was true, there wouldn't be any more talk about the cross, which is such a stumbling block for the Jews. ¹²Oh how I wish that those men who are getting you all upset would cut off their sex organs completely!

¹³You see, my brothers and sisters, God has called you to be free people, but not so that your freedom will become an excuse to let your sinful minds and bodies* run wild. Instead, you must use your Christian love to serve one another as though you were slaves. ¹⁴After all, the whole Law is put into one commandment - "You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself".⁺ ¹⁵But if you keep on attacking and tearing each other to pieces, you must watch out so that you won't completely destroy each other.

Your Lives Must be Controlled by the Spirit

¹⁶I'm also telling you that you must live as the Spirit tells you to live, and never let any desire of your sinful mind and body have its way. ¹⁷You see, what your sinful mind and body wants is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is just the opposite of what your sinful mind and body wants, because these two are really enemies. And this means that you don't do the things you really want to do.* ¹⁸But since you're being led by the Spirit, you're not under the Law.

¹⁹Of course everybody knows the kind of things our sinful mind and body does - things like sexual sins and other disgusting and immoral thoughts, words and

actions, ²⁰worshipping idols and using magic, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfish ambition, dividing up into opposing gangs and groups, ²¹and envy. It leads people to get drunk and parade around town in their drunken condition, and other things like these. I'm warning you as I have done before, that people who do things like this will never have any part in God's Kingdom, which He has set aside to give to His children.

²²But the things the Spirit produces are Christian love,* joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There can't be any law against things like this. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ have nailed their sinful body, with all its evil passions and sinful desires, to His cross. ²⁵Since the Spirit has made us alive, we must live by the Spirit's rules. ²⁶We mustn't become boastful and say things that will make each other angry, or be jealous of each other.

Carry Your Own Load and Help Others

6 My brothers and sisters, even if someone is caught doing something wrong, you who are spiritual people must try to help that person back onto the right path in a kind and helpful way. But you must keep an eye on yourself, so that you won't be tempted too. ²And when it comes to carrying the heavy loads, you must help one another, for when you do that, you'll be doing what Christ's Law asks you to do.

³Remember that if a person thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he's just fooling himself. ⁴But every person must examine what he's doing to see if it will pass the test. Then he will have something of his very own to brag about, instead of what someone else has done. ⁵After all, every person has to carry his own load. ⁶And the person who is being taught God's Word must share all the good things he has with his teacher.

⁷Don't let anyone fool you and lead you astray. No

one makes a fool of God. After all, a person will get back exactly what he plants. ⁸That means that the person who does things to please his sinful mind and body will get back a harvest of destruction from that sinful mind and body. But the person who does things to please the Spirit will get back from the Spirit a harvest of eternal Life. ⁹And we mustn't get discouraged and stop doing things that are good, for when the time comes we shall gather in the harvest, if we don't give up. ¹⁰And this means that whenever we can, we must do something good to everyone, and especially to those who belong to our family of believers.

Final Warnings and Benediction

¹¹Notice what big letters I use when I write to you with my own hand. ¹²The people who are trying to force you to be circumcised* are the kind who want to fix up their bodies so that they will look good. But the only reason they're doing this is so that they won't be attacked and injured or killed because of Christ's cross. ¹³The truth is that those people who are circumcised don't even keep the Law themselves. But they want you to be circumcised, so that they can boast about what they have done to your bodies.

¹⁴But I hope it never happens that I will be boasting about anything except the cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ died. Because of that cross I want nothing to do with the world, and the world wants nothing to do with me. ¹⁵After all, it doesn't make any difference whether a person is circumcised or not.* But being a new creature does make a difference. ¹⁶And God's peace* and mercy rests on all those who will live by this rule, and on those who are members of God's true nation of Israel. ¹⁷And so from now on no one must give me any trouble, because I'm carrying Jesus' brand marks on my body.

¹⁸I'M PRAYING THAT AS MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST'S UNDESERVED LOVE. THIS IS TRULY MY PRAYER.*

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCHES AROUND EPHESUS

(Written from Rome in 61 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, whom God chose to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

And I'm writing to God's people* in _____* as those who believe in Christ Jesus.

2 God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.

Christ has Brought Us Many Blessings

3 We must praise our God, who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for through Christ He has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world.

4 You see, it was His love, and what Christ did for us, that led God to choose us* before the world was created to live with Him as people who are holy and spotlessly clean.* **5** Yes, He chose us because He had already decided in eternity to adopt us into His family as His children through the work of Jesus Christ. And so it all happened just as God had decided and wanted, **6** so that we would be singing the praises of His glorious undeserved love which He has given us so freely as the result of what His dear Son did for us. **7** For that Son bought us back and set us free and took away our sins with His own blood. And all this happened because of the fullness of God's undeserved love, **8a** which He has poured into our lives in such an overflowing way.

9a But even before Christ did all this, **8b** God used all His wisdom and understanding **9b** to tell us about the secret plan* He was going to follow, since long before that He had decided that He wanted Christ to do this. **10** and when the right time comes, that plan will be completed, when Christ brings everything in outer space and everything on earth together into

*Helpful notes for Ephesians begin on page 830

one Kingdom with Himself as the Head.*

11But it's because of what Christ did for us that we were chosen to be God's own special people.* And since God is the one who runs the whole universe and keeps it all going, our choosing was also a part of God's plan which He decided to follow. **12**And when He chose us, He planned that we* who were the first to place our trust in our Messiah* should live in such a way that we bring praise and honor to God.

13But now you people* have also heard the message which brings people the truth, the Good News about how you have been saved, and you have also come to believe in Christ. And when you came to faith, Jesus put His special brandmark on you, showing that you belong to Him, by giving you His Holy Spirit whom He had promised.* **14**And the Spirit is also our guarantee that we shall receive everything God has set aside to give to His children. And this means that we shall be completely free, so that all praise and honor will be given to our glorious Savior.

I'm Thankful for You People, and I Pray for You

15And therefore since I have heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and the Christian love* you have for all of God's people,* **16**I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. **17**I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Father, will give you His Spirit who reveals things to men and makes them wise by His full knowledge.* **18**I also pray that the Spirit will open the eyes of your minds with His light, so that you will know what that hope is to which God has called you, and what a wonderful abundance of things He has set aside to give to His people. **19**I also pray that the Spirit will show you how tremendously great God's power is that He makes available to us who are believers, since that mighty power is an active thing. **20**It's the same mighty power which God put to work in Christ's body when He raised Him back to life from the dead and seated

Him at His right hand in the heavenly world, ²¹far above every ruler, authority, power or lord,* and every creature known to man, not only in this world, but also in the world to come. ²²Yes, "God has put everything under His feet",⁺ and has given Him to the Church as the Head of everything. ²³And the Church is His body, the full body of the One who fills all things in all places.

We Have been Raised from Death to Life

² There was a time when you people* were dead because of your disobedience and sins. ²At that time you were living in sin, following this world's way of life, and guided by the spirit that is always working in the hearts of those people who disobey God. And you were taking your orders from that ruler who controls the spiritual atmosphere of this world.*

^{3a}And there was a time when all of us* were just like you, ^{5a}dead because of our disobedience. ^{3b}At that time we also were living according to the desires of our sinful mind and body,* doing the things our sinful bodies and minds wanted to do. And we were going to be destroyed by God's holy anger, just like everyone else.

^{4a}But since God's heart is full of mercy, ^{5b}He made us all alive with Christ. ^{4b}And what made Him do this was the great love for us that He had⁺ in His heart. ^{5c}Yes, it is God's undeserved love which has saved you. ⁶So He raised us back to Life with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly world because of what Christ Jesus did. ⁷And God did all this so that in the ages to come He could show how tremendously great His undeserved love is by the kindness He has shown to us through Christ Jesus.

⁸As I said, it is God's undeserved love which has saved you through faith, and you didn't do anything to help. It's all God's gift, ⁹and it doesn't depend on anything anyone does, so that no one can have anything

+Verses quoted in Ephesians are on page 878

to brag about. ¹⁰After all, we are something God has made, since Christ Jesus created us to do the good things that God has already prepared for us to do.

We Have All become One Body in Christ Jesus

¹¹Now therefore you must remember that there was a time when you were a part of the other nations,* which are called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcised",* because they have had this operation on their bodies. And you must also remember ¹²that at that time you were completely separated from Christ, and you were not citizens of the Kingdom of Israel, and you had never heard of God's agreements which He made when He gave His promise.* And therefore you were living in the world as people who were without God and had no hope. ¹³But now, because of Christ Jesus you people who once were far away from God and His people have been brought very near to Him and to us by Christ's blood.

¹⁴You see, Christ is our peace, because with His body of flesh and blood He tore down the wall of hatred that separated the Jews from the non-Jews, and in this way made one group out of the two. ¹⁵That wall was the Law, and Christ put an end to the Law, with its commandments and rules, so that He could create one new man out of the two, and make peace by joining them both with Himself. ¹⁶He used the cross to destroy the hatred and make both of them God's friends again by joining them both together in one body.

¹⁷After that He came "and brought the Good News about this peace to you people who were far away, as well as to those who were near".⁺ ¹⁸And this Good News says that Christ has made it possible for God's Spirit to draw both of us near to our Father. ¹⁹And this means that you aren't foreigners and citizens of a different country any longer.

Now you are fellow citizens in the Kingdom of God's people, and members of God's family, ²⁰because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, in which Jesus Christ Himself is the cornerstone.* ²¹He is the one who puts the whole building together and makes it grow into a holy temple for the Lord. ²²And the Spirit is also building you all together into God's house on Christ the cornerstone.

My Work among the Foreign Nations

³ And therefore I, (Paul) who am now Christ's prisoner, (have a request to make of you,)* since it's really for the sake of you people of the other nations* that I'm now in prison. ²You have heard that God gave me the job of making His undeserved love known to you people. ³And you know that God told me about His secret in a very special way, for I have already written about this in a very brief way.* ⁴If you will turn to this and read it again, you can see that I understand this secret about Christ. ⁵ It's a secret that wasn't made known to the people of the world in the past as God has now made it known to His holy apostles and prophets* by His Spirit. ⁶The secret is that through the Good News the people of the other nations* are also going to receive from God all the good things He has set aside to give to His children in the nation of Israel, and that they are now members of the same body and have an equal share in the promise God made through Christ Jesus.

⁷And in His undeserved love God has given me the privilege of being His servant to spread this Good News. And it's His power which is working in me as I do so. ⁸I'm by far the least of all God's people.* However God gave me this privilege of going to the people of the other nations and telling them the Good News about the riches of Christ, which no one could ever discover by his own efforts. ⁹And I must also show everyone what is being done about this secret, which has been kept hidden from eternity by God, who created all things. ^{11a}And so according to His eternal plan, ¹⁰God has now made known through the Church all of His rich and varied wisdom,* telling

the rulers and authorities of the heavenly world ^{11b}what He has done through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹²Yes, it is Christ who makes it possible for us to enter into God's presence, and we do so with all boldness and confidence by our faith in Christ. ¹³And so I'm asking you not to be discouraged by the sufferings and troubles I'm having for your sake, for they have brought you eternal glory, honor and happiness.

You Need God's Power and Christ's Love

¹⁴Therefore I'm praying to our Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth gets its name. ¹⁶And I'm asking Him, who has such a glorious abundance of everything, to fill your inner man with power by His Spirit. ¹⁷I'm also praying that Christ will live in your hearts through your faith, and that Christian love will be the soil which supplies you with life and strength, and also the foundation on which your life is built. ¹⁸I'm praying that together with all of God's people, you will be fully able to understand how wide and long and high and deep Christian love is,* ¹⁹and also that you will come to know Christ's love, even though His love is far too great for anyone to fully understand. Yes, I'm praying that you will be completely filled with all that God has to give you!*

²⁰Our God is so powerful that He can do much, much more than we ask Him to do, or would ever think of asking Him to do, as He uses His power that is working in our lives. ²¹And all the Church does, and all Christ Jesus has done, bring glory and honor to Him throughout all ages forever and ever. Yes, it really does!

We are All One Body in Christ

⁴ Therefore even though I'm a prisoner, I'm speaking for the Lord when I urge you to live in the way God had in mind when He called you to be His people. ²This means that you must always be willing to take the lowest place and be gentle and kind to others. And your Christian love must lead you to be patient and put up

with one another's faults. ³The Spirit has joined you all together, and you must do your very best to preserve this unity by living together in peace, which ties you all together. ⁴For you there can be only one body and one Spirit, just as God gave you all one hope when He called you. ⁵And there is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶and one God, who is the Father of all men and women. He rules over all of us, works through all of us, and lives in all of us.*

⁷But each one of us has received some gift from God, and it's Christ who has measured them out to us. ⁸This is why God says,

"He went up into heaven and took those
whom He had captured with Him,
and then He gave gifts to us people on earth".⁺

⁹But how do the words "He went up" have any meaning unless He had also gone down into the lower parts here on earth? ¹⁰So the one who went down is the same one who went up far above all the heavens,* so that He could fill the whole universe.* ¹¹And He has given us some men who are apostles, some men who are prophets, some men who spread the Good News, and others who are shepherds and teachers,* ¹²so that God's people will be equipped for their work of helping others and building up Christ's body.*

¹³And the goal is that we all should come to the point where we're perfectly united, believing the same thing, and having a full knowledge of God's Son,* so that each of us will be a perfect human being, one who is as fully grown and grown up as Christ Himself. ¹⁴Yes, we must come to the point where we aren't little children any longer, like small boats that are driven this way and that way by the waves, and carried here and there by every wind. That is, we must come to the point where we aren't carried away by every new teaching that comes to us by the clever tricks of men who use underhanded tricks to fool us and carry us away into some error.*

¹⁵Instead, our Christian love must lead us to always

speak the truth, so that we grow to be more perfectly united with Christ in every way. For He is the Head **16**who joins the whole body together and holds it together by every supporting muscle. And He is the one who makes the body grow, as each and every part does its work, so that it builds itself up by Christian love.*

Off with the Old, On with the New!

17And now I'm speaking for the Lord when I tell you this. You mustn't go on living any longer like the people of the other nations,* whose lives are directed by the foolish thoughts that come from their own minds. **18**You see, their minds are completely in the dark,* and because they're so ignorant and their hearts are so hard, they know nothing about God's kind of Life. **19**They're the kind of people who have no feeling of shame. And therefore they have given themselves over to filthy and immoral conduct, doing everything that is filthy and unclean because of their greed.*

20But Christ didn't teach you to live like that, **21**because Jesus teaches only the truth. And since you have heard about Christ, and since He has been your teacher, **22**you must try to get rid of your old self,* which controlled your old way of life. It's going to be destroyed anyway, since it's filled with evil desires which deceive us and lead us into sin. **23**And your hearts and minds must be made completely new. **24**Yes, you must put on your new self, which has been created to be like God, always doing the right and holy things which the truth leads us to do.

Instructions for the New Life

25This means that you must get rid of everything that is false and dishonest, and "each one of you must tell the truth when you speak with your neighbor",⁺ because we're all members of one body. **26**"When you're angry, you mustn't do or say sinful things;"⁺ and the setting sun mustn't see you still angry. **27**And don't give the devil any place in your heart.

28The person who is stealing must stop it and start

doing some real work. He must do something useful with his hands, so that he will have something to share with the person who needs help.

29You mustn't let any filthy talk come out of your mouths. Instead, see if you can't find something good to say that will strengthen or help the people you're talking to in some needed way, and do them a favor.

30And you must stop doing things that make God's Holy Spirit sad, because having the Spirit is God's special mark which shows that you belong to Him until the day comes when you will be set free.

31You must get rid of all meanness, bad temper and anger, and stop shouting and saying insulting things to other people. In fact, you must get rid of every evil, **32**and try to be kind and tender-hearted towards one another, forgiving each other, just as God has forgiven you because of what Christ has done.

5 Since you are God's dear children, you must try to do everything the way God does. **2**And your lives must be controlled by Christian love,* just as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

3And since you are God's people, it isn't right that sexual sins or any kind of unclean thoughts and actions or greed should even be mentioned in your group. **4**And there should be no bad language or foolish talking or telling jokes about other people either, for a Christian doesn't do such things. Instead, the right kind of talking for you is thanksgiving. **5**For you must know very well that there is no place in Christ's and God's Kingdom for any person whose sexual life is immoral, or anyone who is unclean or greedy, for a greedy person is an idolator.* **6**And you mustn't let anyone fool you by telling you lies, for these are the things that bring down God's holy anger on those who disobey Him. **7**So you must have nothing to do with such people.

You are Now Children of Light

8You see, there was a time when you were living

in the darkness.* But now the Lord has brought you into the light, and you must be living like children of the light, ¹⁰always trying to learn the things that please the Lord. ⁹Of course the light brings forth everything that is good and holy and true.

¹¹And you must have nothing to do with the things that are done in the darkness, which serve no useful purpose. Instead, you must bring all such things out into the light. ¹²The truth is that a person is ashamed to even talk about the things people do in secret. ¹³But everything the light shines on is clearly seen. ¹⁴Or we can say that everything that is clearly seen is a part of the light. And that's why the hymn says,

"Wake up, sleepyhead,
and come back to life from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you".*

¹⁵Therefore you must be very careful how you live. That is, don't be living like ignorant people, but like wise people, ¹⁶making good use of every opportunity you have to do good things, because we're living in evil times. ¹⁷Therefore don't be fools, but try to learn what the Lord wants you to do.

¹⁸And you must stop drinking so much wine that you get drunk, for that makes you live like wild, reckless people. Instead, you must be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹using the words of the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs when you speak to each other, and when your heart is singing hymns and psalms to the Lord, ²⁰and every time you give thanks to God our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for all His blessings.

²¹And when you're filled with the Spirit you will always take the lower position of the servant when you're with other believers, because of your fear and respect for Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²²So you wives must obey your husbands, as you obey the Lord. ²³Because the husband is the wife's

head, in the same way that Christ is the church's head, since He is the Savior of that body. ²⁴So the wives must obey their husbands in every way, just as the church obeys Christ.

²⁵And you husbands must love your wives in the same way that Christ loved the church. He gave His own life for the church, ²⁶and then He made her clean by washing her with water and His Word, so that she could be set aside to be His servant. ²⁷And He did all this so that finally the church could live with Him in all her glory, holy and spotlessly clean, without a single spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. ²⁸That's how husbands should love their wives - just as much as they love their own bodies.

And the man who loves his wife is loving himself. ²⁹For certainly no one ever hated his own body. Instead, he feeds it and takes care of it in the same way that Christ feeds and takes care of the church. ³⁰And we are the members of His body. ³¹And the Bible says, "For this reason a man must leave his father and his mother and join himself to his wife, and the two will become one body".⁺ ³²There's a great secret truth* here, and I'm applying it to Christ and the church. ³³But it also applies to you. Every husband must love his wife just as much as he loves himself, and the wife must have respect for her husband.

Children and Parents

⁶ And you children must obey your parents for the Lord's sake, for this is the right thing to do - ²"You must honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment that has a promise - ³"so that everything will turn out well for you, and you will live in your land for a long time".⁺

⁴And you fathers must not make your children angry. Instead, you must bring them up by using the Lord's kind of discipline and instruction.*

Slaves and Masters

5You slaves must obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, and do it with sincere hearts, just as you obey Christ. **6**You mustn't be the kind of slaves who work only when your masters are watching you, like those who do things just to please other people. Instead, you must serve them as though you were serving Christ, doing what God wants with all your hearts, **7**and doing your work cheerfully, as though you were working for the Lord, and not for men. **8**For you know that the Lord will give every person what he has coming for every good thing he has done, whether he's a slave or a free person.

9And you masters must treat your slaves just as the Lord treats all of us. You must also stop threatening them, because you know that you both have the same Master in heaven, and that He doesn't judge people by their outward appearance or what other people think of them.*

Instructions for the Battle against Evil

10And finally, you must let the Lord make you strong by His mighty power. **11**And you must put on all the armor God gives you, so that you'll be able to stand up against the devil's clever tricks. **12**You see, we aren't wrestling against human beings. We're wrestling against the wicked spiritual forces of the earthly world,* and the rulers and authorities and world powers of this dark world of ours. **13**And this is why you must wear all the armor God gives you, so that you'll be able to stand up against all these forces when that evil day comes, and still be standing after you have finished fighting.

14Therefore take your position "with the belt of truth around your waist",⁺ and "with Christ's perfect record of obedience to God's Law as your protective vest",*⁺ **15**and "with your training and readiness to spread the Good News of peace as the shoes on your feet",⁺ **16**and always carrying the shield of faith,

with which you'll be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ¹⁷And you must also wear "the helmet of salvation"⁺ God gives you, and carry "the Spirit's sword, which is God's Word".⁺ ¹⁸And you must always be praying with the help of the Spirit, using every kind of prayer and request; and in particular you must always be awake and ready to pray with all your strength for all of God's people.*

¹⁹And please keep on praying for me also, asking that God will give me the words to speak when I must do so, so that I can tell people boldly and clearly about the secret of the Good News.* ²⁰And because I've been doing this I'm a prisoner right now, but still God's messenger. So keep praying that God will give me the boldness and courage to speak my message as I should.

Final Remarks

²¹Our dear brother Tychicus will tell you everything, so that you people will also know what has happened to me and what I'm doing. He's a faithful servant in the Lord's work. ²²This is one reason why I have sent him to you, so that you will know how we're getting along. The other reason is that I want him to give you new courage.

²³I pray that the faith which comes from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will also bring peace* and Christian love to all the brothers and sisters there.

²⁴AND I'M ALSO PRAYING THAT ALL THOSE WHO LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY HIS UNDESERVED LOVE FOR ALL ETERNITY.*

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN PHILIPPI

(Written from Rome in late 61 or 62 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

And we're writing to all of God's people* in Christ Jesus* who are living in Philippi, together with their pastors and helpers.

2 God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.*

How Thankful I am for You People

3 I thank my God every time I think of you. **4** And when I pray for you all, my heart is always filled with joy, **5** because of the way you have shared in the work of spreading the Good News from the first day you heard it until now. **6** And there's one thing I'm sure of - that the one who has begun the good work in you will keep on working to make it perfect until the Day of Christ Jesus.* **7** It's only right for me to feel this way about all you people, because you have a special place in my heart, and you have all shared in the work God has given me to do during this time I have been in prison, and when I was defending the Good News and getting it firmly planted. **8** God could tell you how anxious I am to see you all, since I have the same tender feelings for you that Christ Jesus has.

I Want You to Grow More Perfect

9 I'm always praying that your Christian love* will become more and more filled with God's full knowledge and understanding, **10** so that you will choose the things that are best, and thus be pure and blameless on the Day of Christ. **11** Yes, I pray that your lives will be filled with things that are right in God's sight, since

*Helpful notes for Philippians begin on page 835

this will be the fruit produced in your lives by Jesus Christ, so that God will be praised and honored.

Things are Really Going Well

12I also want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the things which have happened to me have helped to spread the Good News, **13**for now all the soldiers in the Emperor's palace and all the other people here know that I'm in prison because I believe in Christ. **14**And because I'm in prison most of our brothers who believe in the Lord are now much more confident and have much more courage to speak God's message without any fear.

15aSome of them are even telling others about Christ because they're jealous and like to quarrel. **17**They aren't really sincere about what they're doing, because they're doing it out of selfish ambition, thinking that they will stir up trouble for me while I'm in prison. **15b**But others are speaking about Christ willingly, **16**out of Christian love, because they know that I'm here to defend the Good News.

18But what difference does it make? The important thing is that in one way or another, whether they're sincere about what they're doing or not, the news about Christ is getting around, and I'm happy about that.

I Know that Everything will Turn Out Well

But I'm going to be even happier. **19**You see, I know that through your prayers, and with the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, everything will work out so that I will be set free. **20**And my great desire and hope is that I shall never have anything to be ashamed of, and that I shall continue now to have the boldness and courage I have always had to bring honor to Christ by what I do and say, whether I live or die.

21You see, for me living is Christ, and dying will make me much richer. **22a**But if I go on living in this sinful body, I'll keep on working and accomplishing something. **23a**But I'm being pulled in two directions,

22band I don't know which I should choose. **23b**You see, I want very much to leave this world and be with Christ, for that is a much better Life. **24**But when I think of you, it's more necessary that I remain here in this sinful body.* **25**And that's one thing I'm pretty sure of. In fact I know I'm going to stay here and continue to be with you all, to help you grow and be happy in your faith. **26**And when I'm there with you again, Christ Jesus will make you even prouder of me.

27The important thing is that you must keep on living the way people should live when they have heard the Good News about Christ. Then it won't matter whether I come and see you or not. Even if I'm not there, I'll hear about what you're doing. For I'll hear that you're standing firm in one spirit, fighting together with one mind for the faith which the Good News gives us, **28**and that you're not frightened in any way by your enemies. And this will be a warning sign to your enemies that they're going to be destroyed and you're going to be saved. And your salvation will come from God, **29**because for Christ's sake He has not only given you the privilege of believing in Christ, but also the privilege of suffering for Him. **30**And the battle you're fighting now is the same battle you saw me fighting earlier. And as you're learning now, I'm still fighting.

You Must Live for Others, as Christ Did

2 You know that it's Christ who gives you encouragement, and that it's His love that gives you comfort, and that you have a close friendship with the Spirit. And since your hearts are filled with love and pity, **2**please make me completely happy by all thinking the same thoughts and holding fast to the same Christian love. Be people of one spirit, and one mind. **3**Never do anything because of selfish ambition or foolish pride.

Instead, each one must humbly think of others as being more important than himself, **4**so that you never think about what is best for yourself, but about what is best for others.

⁵You must always try to have the same thoughts and aims that Christ Jesus had. ⁶Although He had always lived as God, with a divine body, He didn't think being equal with God was something He must try to hold on to. ⁷Instead, He gave it all up and took the body of a slave, being born as all men and women are born. And when He found Himself living as a man, ⁸He took the very lowest place and lived a slave's life of obedience until the day He died. And He died as a criminal on a cross.*

⁹And this is why God has raised Him up to the very highest place, and has given Him the name which is above every other name. ¹⁰And therefore when the name of Jesus is spoken, every creature in outer space and on earth and under the earth "must fall on their knees before Him. ¹¹And every one will openly say"+ that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and thus bring glory and honor to God, His Father and our Father.

You Must Let Your Light Shine!

¹²My dear friends, you have always done what I have asked you to do, and not only when I was there with you. But now that I'm not there with you, I hope you will be even more ready to do what I tell you. Each of you must keep on working with fear and trembling to hold onto your salvation. ¹³And remember that God is the one who is always working in your hearts and lives to make you willing and able to do what He wants.

¹⁴Therefore you must do everything without complaining and arguing, ¹⁵so that you will be pure and innocent of all sin, spotlessly clean children of God living in the midst of a world of crooked and evil people. And in the midst of such a world you must always be shining like the stars in the sky* ¹⁶as you offer them the message that brings Life. If you will do this, I shall be able to boast on the Day of Christ*

+Verses quoted in Philippians are on page 878

that I didn't run a losing race, and that all my hard work wasn't wasted.

17But even if my lifeblood will be poured out like a drink-offering* over the sacrifice and service you are bringing to God as an expression of your faith, I shall be joyful, and I will share my joy with all of you. **18**And in the same way you must also be joyful and share your joy with me.

Personal News

19I'm hoping that with the help of the Lord Jesus I can send Timothy to see you fairly soon, because I'll also feel better when I find out how you're getting along. **20**You see, I don't have anyone else who shares my thoughts and feelings so perfectly, and who will be truly concerned about how you're getting along. **21**The truth is that all the others are looking for things that will benefit them, instead of Jesus Christ. **22**But you know what kind of a man Timothy has proved himself to be. For you know that he has been like a son to me, and has worked with me like a slave to spread the Good News. **23**So he's the one I hope to send, just as soon as I find out what's going to happen to me. **24**And I'm sure that with the Lord's help I myself will also be coming soon.

25 I also thought it was necessary to send our brother Epaphroditus back to you.* He's my fellow worker and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and servant, who has been taking care of my needs. **26** I felt I had to send him because he has been so anxious to see you all, and so worried because you heard that he had been sick. **27**It's true that he was sick and almost died. But God had mercy on him. And not only on him, but also on me, so that I wouldn't have one sorrow on top of another. **28**Therefore I was all the more eager to send him, so that when you have seen him, you will be happy again, and I will have one less sorrow. **29**Give him a Christian welcome therefore with all joy. And honor men like him, **30**because he

risked his life and nearly died for the sake of Christ's work to give me the help which you couldn't give me.

A Warning Against Jewish False Teachers

3 And finally, brothers and sisters, you must be joyful, because of what the Lord has done. I'm not afraid to repeat what I have written before; and it's the safe thing to do for you. **2** Watch out for those dogs who do such wicked things, the ones who cut up their bodies. **3** After all, we are the ones who are truly circumcised, because we are worshiping and serving God by the power of God's Spirit. And we boast about Christ Jesus, and put no trust in our sinful mind and body.*

I Have Found the Real Treasure

4 However I'm a man who could put my trust even in my sinful mind and body. If anyone else thinks he can put his trust in his sinful mind and body, I have a better reason to do so. **5** I was circumcised on the eighth day as a member of the nation of Israel, and the tribe of Benjamin, and I'm a pure-blooded Hebrew. When it came to the Law, I was a Pharisee. **6** When it came to being fired up, I was so full of fire that I hunted down the members of the Church like animals. When it came to doing perfectly everything the Law says, no one could find any fault with me.

7 But whatever those things were that I thought were so valuable, now I think of them all as worthless because of Christ. **8** And it isn't just all those things. Now I think of everything as worthless, because knowing Christ Jesus as my Lord is such a tremendously more valuable thing. Because of Him I have thrown everything away, and I think of it all as garbage, so that I can have Christ as my Savior, **9** and be found in Him.* For I don't want to have the kind of holiness that I have earned, the kind that comes from trying to keep the Law. I want to have the holiness that comes through faith in Christ, the holiness that comes from God, and is based on faith.* **10** In other words, I want to know Christ, and the power that raised Him from the

dead. And I also want to share His sufferings, and die as He did, ¹¹hoping that I will be one of those who is raised back to Life from the dead.

Try to Follow My Example in Your Daily Lives

¹² I can't say that I'm certain I'll have all this, or that I'm already perfect, but I keep on running, hoping that I will make it all mine, because Christ Jesus has made me His. ¹³Yes, brothers and sisters, I certainly don't think I have already made it all mine. But I can say one thing, that I forget about the things that are behind me, and I stretch out to reach the things that are still ahead of me. ¹⁴And I keep on running toward the goal, trying to win the prize, which is God's invitation to take part in the Life above, which He gives to us through Christ Jesus.

¹⁵And all of us who are spiritually grown-up must have the same thoughts and aims. And if you have some different ideas about this, God will also make this clear to you. ¹⁶But whatever progress we have made, we must keep on following the same rules we have always followed.

¹⁷My brothers and sisters, you must all try to live as I do. And you must keep watching those who are living according to the pattern we have given you. ¹⁸Because there are many people whose lives show that they are enemies of Christ's cross. I have told you about these people many times, and now I'm telling you with tears in my eyes ¹⁹that they're going to end up in hell. Their god is their belly, and they are proud of things they should be ashamed of, since they think only about earthly things.

²⁰But the kingdom of which we are citizens is in heaven, and we're expecting our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come back from heaven. ²¹And when He does, He will change our poor earthly bodies and make them just like His wonderful body, using that power by which He is able to bring everything under His own control.

4 And so my dear brothers and sisters, this will help you to keep on standing firm, with the Lord's help. You are my joy and my crown, and I'm terribly anxious to see you.

Personal Requests

2 Evodia and Syntyche, I'm pleading with you to be perfectly agreed, as sisters with the Lord's help. **3** And I'm asking you, my true partner,* to help these ladies who have worked so hard with me to spread the Good News, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life.*

Be Living Examples of the Christian Life

4 What the Lord has done must always fill our hearts with joy! Yes, I'll say it again - it must always fill our hearts with joy! **5** Everyone must know how kind and considerate you are.

The Lord is coming soon. **6** So don't be worrying about anything. But every time you pray and ask for something, let God know what you want with a thankful heart. **7** And God's peace,* which is far greater than any mind can understand, will keep on guarding your hearts and minds with the help of Christ Jesus.

8 Finally brothers and sisters, you must keep on thinking about everything that is excellent and worthy of praise, the kind of things that are true, respectable, right, pure, lovely and pleasing. **9** And keep on doing those things you have learned and received from me, whether it was something I told you to do, or something you saw me doing. And our God who gives us peace will be with you.

Thanks for all Your Gifts and Help!

10 As one who is in Christ, my heart was filled with joy to see that now, after all this time, you were still concerned about me. Of course you were always thinking of me, but you didn't have the chance to show it. **11** I'm not saying this because I'm in need of anything, because I have learned to be content under all conditions. **12** I know what it is to be poor, and I know what

it is to have plenty. And I have learned the secret of feeling that I have all I need in every situation and at all times, whether I'm well-fed or hungry, whether I have more than I need or not enough. ¹³I'm strong enough for every situation, because of the one who makes me strong.

¹⁴But you did a fine thing to share what you have with me in my troubles. ¹⁵And you people in Philippi also know that in the early days, right after I brought you the Good News and then left Macedonia, there wasn't any other church who shared their income with me to repay me for what they had received. You were the only ones who did this. ¹⁶For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent a gift to supply my needs, not just once, but twice.

¹⁷It isn't that I'm looking for a gift. Instead, I'm looking for the fruit that keeps on piling up on your account. ¹⁸Now that I have received your gift from Epaphroditus, I have received full payment, and even more, so that I have more than I need. And the gifts you sent were a sweet smelling offering to God, and a sacrifice which was pleasing and acceptable to Him. ¹⁹And in His wonderful way my God will supply your every need from His limitless wealth, through Christ Jesus. ²⁰So the glory and honor belong to our God and Father forever and ever. Yes, it really does!

Final Greetings

²¹Give my greetings to every one of God's people,* as from one believer in Christ Jesus to another.

The brothers who are with me send you their greetings. ²²All of God's people here send you their greetings, especially those who are living in the Emperor's palace.

²³I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!*

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN COLOSSAE

(Written from Rome in 61 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, whom God chose to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy.

2 And I'm writing to God's people* in Colossae, our faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.*

God our Father sends you His love which no one deserves, and His peace.*

I'm Truly Thankful for You People

3 When we pray for you, we're always giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **4** because we have heard about your faith in Christ Jesus, and the Christian love* you have for all of God's people.*

5 This love comes from the hope you have for what is stored away for you in heaven. You heard about all this some time ago, when our true message of the Good News came to you. **6** And this Good News is growing and bearing fruit in every part of the world, just as it has done in your city from the day you first heard about God's undeserved love and came to know fully* what it really is.

7 You learned all this from Epaphras, our dear friend and fellow slave. He's a faithful servant of Christ who is carrying on our work there for us. **8** He's also the one who told us about your Christian love which the Spirit has given you.

The True God Will Give You Full Knowledge

9 This is why we never stop praying for you. Ever since the day we first heard about your faith and love, we're always asking God to give you a full knowledge* of what He wants by giving you full spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10** Then you will be living as the

*Helpful notes for Colossians begin on page 836

Lord's children should, and always be doing what pleases Him, bearing fruit by doing every kind of good work, and always growing in the full knowledge of God. ¹¹We're also praying that God will make you strong with all the strength that comes from His glorious heavenly power, so that you will patiently hold on to your faith with joyful hearts ¹²as you thank your Father who has made you good enough to have a share in the things He has set aside to give to His people in the Kingdom of Light. ¹³For God has rescued us from the power of darkness* and has transferred us into the Kingdom of His own dear Son, ¹⁴who bought us back and set us free when He took away our sins.

Who Jesus is and What He has Done

¹⁵That Son is the exact image of the invisible God, who was born before the world was created. ¹⁶Then He created everything in outer space and everything on earth, things we can see and things we can't see, whether they're called kings, lords, rulers or authorities.* The Son created everything, and everything exists to serve Him. ¹⁷Yes, "He is"* before everything was created, and He holds everything together.

¹⁸And since He is the source of all Life, and the first one to rise again from the dead, the Son is also the Head of His body, the Church, so that He can have the first place in all respects. ¹⁹For the whole fullness of the true God* decided to live in Him ²⁰and use Him to make peace with all God's creatures, changing them from enemies into His friends again. And it was Jesus' blood that He poured out on His cross that did all this. And this peace-making included all God's creatures on earth and all His creatures in heaven.

²¹And of course it also included you, who at one time were completely separated from God because of the wicked things you were doing. At that time you thought of yourselves as God's enemies. ²²But now things are different, because the Son came to

live among us as a man, and He made you God's friends by His death. And He did this so that He can bring you right into God's presence, as people who are so holy and spotlessly clean that no one will be able to accuse you of any sin.* ²³Of course you must continue to stand solidly and firmly on your faith. And you mustn't let yourselves be carried away from the hope you received when you heard the Good News, which has been brought to people in every part of the whole world. And this is the work God has called me (Paul) to do.

My Task is to Make God's Secret Known

²⁴Right now I'm filled with joy about the things I'm suffering for your sake. You see, Christ is using my body to suffer some of the things He still has to suffer for the sake of His body, the Church.

²⁵You see, I became a servant of the Church when God gave me the job of bringing you His message in all its fullness. ²⁶And that message was a secret * which had been kept hidden from eternity from all the nations of the world. But now it has been revealed to God's people.* ²⁷For God wanted His people among the other nations* to know what a rich and wonderful thing that secret is. And this is the secret - having Christ in your heart is your hope for glory and honor.

²⁸So we're telling everyone about Christ. And as we do so, we're warning each one, and also teaching each one using all of God's wisdom, so that we can bring each person into God's presence as a perfect man or woman in Christ.* ²⁹This is my task, and I'm struggling and working at it as hard as I can using Christ's power which is working powerfully in me.

² You see, I want you to know how worried I am about you people, and the people in Laodicea. And there are so many of them who don't know what I look like. ²I'm worried that your hearts may not be filled with courage, even though you have all been joined together by Christian love. And I'm worried that you may not have the kind of understanding that will fill you with

real confidence, and that you may not have a full knowledge* of God's secret. That secret is Christ, ³in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.*

Don't Let Anyone Fool You and Lead You Astray!

⁴I'm telling you this so that no one will fool you with high-pressure sales talk. ⁵You see, even though I'm not there with you in person, I'm there with you in spirit. And I'm filled with joy as I see how you're all standing together shoulder to shoulder, and how firm your faith in Christ is.

⁶And since you have accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must be living for Him. ⁷He must be the soil which supplies you with life and strength, and the foundation on which your life is built. And you must also keep on growing stronger in your faith, as you have been taught, and be overflowing with thankfulness.

You are Now Free from All the Powers of Evil

⁸Watch out so that no one will make you his slaves by his human wisdom and worthless, false ideas, which are based on the teachings handed down by men and on the laws which govern our lives in this world,* and not on Christ. ⁹You see, the whole fullness of the true God* lives in Christ, in His human body, ¹⁰and He, in turn, fills your hearts. He is also the Head of every ruler and authority.* ¹¹And He circumcised you* in a way that can't be done by human hands, for when He circumcised you, He stripped off your sinful mind and body.*

¹²This all happened when you were buried with Christ by baptism and then raised back to Life again with Christ through the faith that was created in your heart by God, who raised Jesus back to Life from the dead.* ¹³Yes, you people were dead because of your sins* and because you hadn't been physically circumcised.* And because God had forgiven all our sins, He made you alive with Christ, ¹⁴and cancelled the debt we owed Him because of His Law. And it was a debt

which threatened to destroy us. But God removed that debt completely when He nailed it to Jesus' cross. **15**And after He had taken away the power of the rulers and authorities, He paraded them around as His captives, as He celebrated the victory He had won over them by Jesus' death.*

Don't Lose Your Freedom!

16Therefore no one has the authority to say that you're right or wrong about what you're eating or drinking, or what you're doing about a religious festival or a new moon festival or a day of rest.* **17**These things are just a shadowy picture of things to come.* But the person who was casting that shadow was Christ.

18But now there are people who want to take away your prize. And they're trying to do so by urging you to be lowly and humble, and to worship the angels.* They're telling you all about the visions and things they have seen, and they're all puffed up by their sinful human minds, although there isn't any reason for them to be so proud. So don't let anyone like this rob you, **19**because he isn't connected with Christ our Head, who supplies His whole body with everything it needs by the arteries, and holds it together by the muscles, so that it keeps growing the way God wants it to grow.*

Our New Life in Christ

20Since you have died with Christ, you have been set free from the kind of basic laws that govern our lives in this world.* So why are you still following a lot of rules, as though you still belonged to this world? **21**Rules like "Keep your hands off this! Don't taste that! Don't touch that!"* **22**These are man-made commandments and teachings, and they all apply to things which are meant to be destroyed as we use them. **23**They are the kind of rules which sound like the wise thing to do if we want to train ourselves to worship and be lowly and keep ourselves clean and on a strict diet. But they're really of no value in controlling our sinful mind and body.*

3 But since you have been raised back to Life with Christ, you must keep on looking for the things that are to be found in heaven, where Christ is sitting at God's right hand. **2**Keep thinking about these heavenly things, not earthly thing. **3**After all, you have died, and now your life is hidden with Christ, who is in God.* **4**For Christ is your Life,* and when He appears, then you will also appear with him in glory and honor.

5This means that you must try to kill everything in your body which belongs to this earth, things like sexual sins, and unclean thoughts and actions, sinful sexual urges and desires, and greed, which is idolatry. **6**It's because of these things that God's holy anger is coming. **7**And there was a time when you people were also living like this and did these things. **8**But now you must also try to get rid of all such things as anger, bad temper and hatred. And there must be no insulting or shameful words coming out of your mouths. **9**You must stop lying to one another, since you have stripped off your old self and all the things it does,* **10**and have put on your new self. And this new self is constantly being made new to the point where it will have full knowledge,* and once again be the true image of his Creator. **11**And then there will be no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, savage or Scythian, slave or free man.* Instead, Christ will be everything, and live in all of them.*

12God loves you, and He has chosen you to be His own people who will serve Him. And therefore your hearts must be full of pity and kindness. You must be willing to take the lowest place, and be kind and gentle to others, and patient. **13**You must put up with one another's faults, and forgive each other when anyone of you has a complaint against a brother. Yes, you must forgive each other in the same way the Lord has forgiven you. **14**And besides all these things, your hearts must be filled with Christian love, which ties us all together perfectly. **15**And Christ's peace must rule your hearts,* for as members of one body you

have been called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

16 Christ's word must completely fill your hearts with all its wisdom, as you teach and warn each other, and when you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.* **17** And everything you do or say must be done as one of the Lord Jesus' followers, as you give thanks to God through Him.*

Our Relations with Others

18 You wives must obey your husbands, since this is your Christian duty.* **19** And you husbands must love your wives, and not be mean and nasty to them.* **20** You children must obey your parents and do everything they say, for this pleases the Lord.* **21** And you fathers mustn't make your children angry and upset, because you don't want them to get so discouraged that they lose all interest in everything.*

22 You slaves must obey your earthly masters and do everything they say. And you mustn't be the kind of slaves who work only when your masters are watching you, like those who do things just to please other people. Instead, you must serve them with a sincere heart, having respect for your master. **23** And whatever you're doing, you must work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord, and not for men, **24** because you know that the Lord will repay you by giving you your share of all the things He has set aside to give to His children. Remember that the Master you're serving is Christ, **25** and the person who does wrong will get what he has coming for what he has done, for God doesn't have any favorites.*

4 And you masters must always do what is right and fair for your slaves, because you know that you also have a Master in Heaven.*

Miscellaneous Instructions

2 Spend plenty of time in prayer, and as you pray, remember to give thanks. **3** And while you're praying,

pray for us also, asking God to give us the opportunity to speak His Word and tell people about the secret of Christ.* That's why I'm here in prison. ⁴Pray that I will make it clear, as I should.

⁵Be wise in the way you act towards those who aren't believers, and make good use of every opportunity. ⁶What you say should always be pleasing and interesting, and you must know how to answer every person.

Personal Greetings

⁷Our dear brother Tychicus will tell you all about what has happened to me. He's a faithful servant of the Lord and my fellow-slave in the Lord's work. ⁸This is why I have sent him to you, so that you will know how we're getting along and won't be worrying about me. ⁹And along with Tychicus I have sent Onesimus, who is a faithful and dear brother, and one of your group.* They will tell you everything that's going on here.

¹⁰My fellow prisoner Aristarchus* sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, who is a cousin of Barnabas. You have received some instructions about Mark, and if he comes to your city, give him a friendly welcome. ¹¹And Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends his greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers in God's Kingdom, and they have been a great comfort to me.

¹²Epaphras, who is a member of your congregation, sends you his greetings. He's a slave of Christ, and is always making special requests for you in his prayers, praying that you will stand firm, as Christians who are perfect and doing God's will in every way. ¹³I can tell you that he's doing a lot of hard work for you people, and the people in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

¹⁴Our dear friend, Doctor Luke, also sends you his greetings, and so does Demas.

¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.

16And when this letter has been read to your group, you must send it on to Laodicea, so that it can also be read to the church there. And you must also read the letter that will be coming to you from Laodicea.*

17And please give Archippus* this message - "The Lord has given you a job to do. See that you get it done."

18I'M SENDING MY GREETINGS IN MY OWN HAND-WRITING — PLEASE REMEMBER THAT I'M IN PRISON. AND I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY GOD'S UNDESERVED LOVE.*

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA

(Written from Corinth in 51 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, Silas* and Timothy.*
And we're writing to the members of the church in Thessalonica, as people who are in God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,* who send you their love which no one deserves and their peace.*

How Thankful We are as We Think of You

2We're always thanking God for all of you people as we remember you in our prayers to our God and Father, because we always **3**remember your faithful work, and your loving toil and labor, and how you have held on patiently because of your hope which our Lord Jesus Christ has given you. **4**And we're thankful because we know that as our brothers and sisters, God loves you and has chosen you. **5**We also know that when our Good News came to you, it wasn't just so many words. No indeed, our message came to you with power, the power of the Holy Spirit, and with full confidence. And you know the kind of men we turned out to be when we were there in your city to bring you the Good News.

6And you people received our message with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, even though it brought you a lot of suffering and trouble.* Then you took us and our Lord as your examples, and patterned your lives after ours. **7**And by doing so, you have become an example to all the believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia.

8But you have done more than make the message about our Lord ring out all over Macedonia and Achaia. For the news about your faith in God has traveled everywhere, so that we never have to say anything

*Helpful notes for 1 Thessalonians begin on page 840

about it. ⁹In fact, people in every city keep on telling about how you welcomed us when we came to your city, and how you turned away from your idols to become slaves of the true and living God, ¹⁰so that you are now waiting for His Son Jesus to come back from heaven. For God has raised Him back to life from the dead, and He is the one who is saving us from God's holy anger which is coming.

You Know What Kind of People We are

² Brothers and sisters, you know what happened when we came to your city, and you know that our visit there wasn't a failure.* ²You also know that even though we had suffered and been insulted in Philippi before we got there,* our God gave us the courage and boldness to tell His message of Good News while we were having a great battle there in your town.*

³You see, when we ask people to do something, it isn't because we want to fool them and lead them astray, or because our hearts are filled with sinful desires. And we don't use any underhanded tricks. ⁴The truth is that God put His stamp of approval on us when He trusted us to bring the Good News to others. And so when we speak, we aren't trying to please men. We're trying to please God,* who is always examining our hearts.

⁵After all, you know that we never came to you with flattering words. And God could tell you that we never came trying to make a good impression to cover up any greed in our hearts, ⁶or looking for the glory and honor that men can give us, neither from you nor anyone else. ⁷As Christ's apostles, we could have ordered you around, but instead we were like children when we were there with you, or like a mother looking after her children. ⁸We had such a warm feeling for you in our hearts that besides sharing God's Good News with you, we were happy to share our lives with you because you had become so dear to us.

⁹Yes, brothers and sisters, you certainly remember

how hard we worked and labored there. All the time we were telling you God's Good News we were working at our trade* day and night, so that we wouldn't be a burden to any one of you. ¹⁰You have seen with your own eyes, and God has too, the God-pleasing, honest and blameless way we treated you people who are now believers. ¹¹Yes, you know that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children. ¹²For we encouraged you and comforted you and kept on urging you to live the kind of life that will please your God, who is calling you to share His own glory and honor in His Kingdom.

Keep on Standing Firm in All Your Troubles!

¹³There is also another reason why we are always thanking God. It's the fact that when you heard what we told you about God, you didn't receive it as some man-made message, but as God's Word, which it really is. And it's always working in the hearts and lives of you people who are believers.

¹⁴You see, my brothers and sisters, you people have become just like God's churches in Christ Jesus* that are in Judea, because you have suffered the same things from your fellow-citizens that those people have suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵who also killed our Lord Jesus and the prophets. And they have also attacked us and hunted us down like animals. But when they do such things, they're certainly not pleasing God. And they're really enemies of all men and women ¹⁶when they try to stop us from talking to the people of the other nations* so that they can be saved. And by doing these things they have always filled up the cup of their sins to overflowing. But now God's holy anger has finally fallen upon them.

How Anxious We are to See You Again!

¹⁷And now, brothers and sisters, we must talk about ourselves, and the fact that we were snatched away from you for a short while.* Of course, we haven't left you so far as our hearts and thoughts are concerned,

but we can't see each other. But after we left, we were terribly anxious to see all of you again, and our desire was so great ¹⁸that we wanted to go back to you. I (Paul) wanted to go two different times, but both times Satan stopped us.

¹⁹After all, what is it that gives us hope and joy? What is it that will give us our crown that will mean so much to us when we are living with the Lord Jesus after He comes back again? Aren't you people also a part of all that? ²⁰Yes, you are our pride and our joy!

³Therefore since we couldn't stand it any longer, we decided that we would stay alone here in Athens ²while we sent our brother Timothy, who is also one of God's fellow workers in spreading the Good News, to see you. We sent him to strengthen you and encourage you in your faith, ³so that no one will begin to wonder about what he should do because of these troubles you're having. After all, you know that there's no way we can escape such things. ⁴In fact, when we were with you, we kept giving you advance warnings that we were going to have trouble. And that's exactly what has happened, as you know. ⁵Therefore since I couldn't stand it any longer, I sent Timothy to find out about your faith, hoping that the Tempter hadn't been successful in his temptations, so that all our work would be wasted.

⁶But now Timothy has come back to us after his visit with you. And he has brought us the good news about your faith and your Christian love. He tells us that you always remember us with a good feeling in your hearts, and that you are just as anxious to see us as we are to see you. ⁷And this news about your faith, brothers and sisters, has been a great comfort to us in our suffering and trouble, ⁸because now we're really living since you are standing firm by the Lord's power. ⁹After all, how could we ever thank God enough for you people, and for all the joy you will give us when we stand in the presence of our God? ¹⁰Yes, we keep on praying day and night, begging God again

and again to let us see you face to face, so that we can make your faith more perfect by supplying what is still missing.

11 So now we're hoping that our God and Father himself, along with our Lord Jesus, will find a way for us to come and see you. **12** And we pray that the Lord will fill your hearts with a greater Christian love* for each other and for all people, until it truly overflows and becomes like our love for you. **13** By doing this He will make you spiritually strong and perfectly holy and without sin in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes back again with all His people.*

Keep on Living a God-Pleasing Life

4 Finally, brothers and sisters, you know that we have taught you how you must live so as to please God, and this is the way you have been living. But now we beg you and urge you by the authority of our Lord Jesus to try to make your lives even more God-pleasing. **2** After all, you know the instructions we gave you, using the words of our Lord Jesus. **3** You see, God wants you to be pure and holy, and to stay away from all sexual sins. **4** He wants each of you men to know how to take a wife for himself in a pure and honorable way, **5** and not just to satisfy his sinful desires and appetites, like the people of the other nations* who don't know God. **6** And you mustn't cheat your brother or take advantage of him in your business, because the Lord will punish those who do all these things. We told you all this a long time ago, and warned you about these things. **7** After all, God hasn't called us to live filthy and unclean lives, but to be pure and holy. **8** And therefore the person who disagrees with all this isn't disagreeing with some man. He's disagreeing with God, who gives you His Holy Spirit.

9 We don't have to write to you about loving your brothers and sisters, for you people have learned from God that you must love one another. **10** And it's true that you're doing this to all your fellow Christians

in the whole province of Macedonia. But now we're urging you brothers and sisters to pour out your love even more. ¹¹We're urging you also to make it your aim to live a quiet life, and mind your own business, and work at some trade, just as we ordered you to do, ¹²so that you can live in a way that will win the respect of those outside your group and have everything you need.

Don't Worry about Those Who have Died

¹³And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know the truth about those who are sleeping, so that you won't be sad, like all the other people in the world who don't have any hope. ¹⁴You see, since we believe that Jesus died and came back to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will have Him bring those who have fallen asleep back with Him.

¹⁵Remember that we're telling you now what our Lord told us. Those of us who are still living and left here on earth until that time when our Lord comes back again will not get to see Him before those who have fallen asleep do. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will come down out of the sky shouting orders, and the head angel will be calling out, and God's bugle will be blowing. And first of all the people who have died believing in Christ will come back to Life again. ¹⁷And then those of us who are still living and left here on earth will be taken up together with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.* And this is how we will always be with our Lord. ¹⁸And now you must use these words to comfort one another.

We Must Always be Ready for His Return

⁵ Brothers and sisters, we don't have to write to you about how long things will last, or when these things are going to happen. ²After all, you people know very well that the Lord's day* is going to come just like a robber does, in the middle of the night.* ³When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," that's when God will destroy everything all of a sudden,

just as labor pains suddenly start up in a pregnant woman, and there's no way that anyone will escape.

⁴But brothers and sisters, you aren't living in the darkness, so that Day shouldn't catch you like a robber does. ⁵You see, you people are all children of the light, or children of the day. We aren't children of the night or children of the darkness. ⁶And this means that we mustn't be sleeping, like the rest of the people. No, we must be awake, knowing what's going on. ⁷After all, the people who sleep do their sleeping at night, and the people who get drunk do their drinking at night. ⁸But since we are children of the day, we must always "be wearing our protective vest" of faith and Christian love, and "our hope of salvation as our helmet".⁺ And we must keep our minds clear, ⁹because God hasn't placed us among those who will feel His holy anger, but among those whom He has set aside to be saved through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰And Christ died for us so that we shall always be living with Him, whether we're awake or sleeping. ¹¹And so you must encourage one another, and each one try to strengthen the other, just as you're doing now.

Closing Instructions

¹²And now brothers and sisters, we're asking you to have respect for those men who are working so hard in your group, the ones whom the Lord has chosen to be your leaders, who are teaching* you and warning you. ¹³You must treat them with the greatest respect and love because of the work they're doing. And you must try to live together in peace.

¹⁴We also urge you, brothers and sisters, to give those men who aren't working a good scolding. And you must also cheer up those who are discouraged, and help the weak, and be patient with everybody. ¹⁵See to it that no one pays back the person who does something bad to him by doing something bad in return.

⁺Verses quoted in 1 Thessalonians are on page 878

Instead, you must always be trying to do something good for one another and for everybody.

16Always be joyful! **17**Always be praying! **18**Give thanks no matter what happens, for Christ Jesus has taught you that this is what God wants you to do.

19Never do anything that will put out the Spirit's fire, **20**and don't ever think that what God says through the prophets is of no value. **21**Keep on testing everything. Keep holding on to what is good **22**and stay away from every kind of wickedness.

Closing Prayer and Benediction

23We're also asking God, who gives us peace,* to make you completely holy. And we're praying that your spirit, soul and body will be kept in perfect condition in every respect until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again. **24**You can always depend on the one who is calling you and be sure that He will also do all this.

25Brothers and sisters, keep on praying for us.

26Greet all the members with a holy kiss. **27**And I'm asking you to promise the Lord himself that you will read this letter to all the members.

28WE'RE PRAYING THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA

(Written from Corinth in 51 or 52 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, Silas* and Timothy.*
1 And we're writing to the members of the church in Thessalonica, people who are in God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2 Both of them send you their love which no one deserves and their peace.*

We're Thankful for You People

3 Brothers and sisters, we must always be thanking God for you people. It's only right that we do this, because your faith is growing so much, and the Christian love you all have for each other is also becoming greater and greater. **4** And for this reason we're boasting about you in God's churches, telling them how patiently you are holding on to your faith in the midst of all the troubles and sufferings you're going through.

Jesus will Reward You for Your Sufferings

5 But your sufferings are a reminder that what God decides to do is always fair and right, for they will make you the kind of people God wants in His Kingdom. And you are now suffering for that Kingdom. **6** So God will surely do the right thing and bring trouble and suffering on the people who are causing you trouble and suffering. **7a** And He will also bring both your sufferings and ours to an end when our Lord Jesus comes back from heaven. And He will come with His mighty angels **8a** "in a blaze of fire",⁺ **7b** so that everyone can see Him. **8b** And at that time "He will also punish those who don't know God",⁺ and those who don't believe the Good News about our Lord Jesus,

*Helpful notes for 2 Thessalonians begin on page 841

⁺Verses quoted in 2 Thessalonians are on page 879

9afor they are the kind of people who will pay the penalty of eternal destruction **10**And on that Day* when Jesus comes to be honored by His people and admired by all who believe in Him, you will be among His people, because you believed what we told you. **9b**But all unbelievers will be separated forever from the Lord's presence and His wonderful heavenly power.*

11And when we think about all this, we're always praying for you, asking our God to make you the kind of people He has called you to be. We pray that He will fulfill your desire for every good thing, and add His power to every work of faith you do. **12**In this way you will bring glory and honor to our Lord Jesus, and He in turn will give you the glory and honor that has been made possible by the undeserved love of our God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Day of the Lord has not Already Come.

2 And now, brothers and sisters, let's talk about the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will come back again and gather us together to be with Him. **2**We're asking you not to forget so quickly what you have learned. Don't be frightened and upset by the thought that the Day of the Lord* has already come, whether that idea came from some prophet who claims to have the Spirit, or some report you heard, or some letter that was supposed to have come from us.

3Don't let anyone fool you in any way, because that Day can't come until some other things happen. First, the great Rebellion against God* must take place, so that everyone will know who the Enemy of law and order is, the man who is called the Great Destroyer,* **4**who will set himself up against everything that is called god and everything that people worship. Yes, he will set himself up above them all, so that he will be sitting in God's Temple and claiming that he himself is God.

5Don't you remember that I used to tell you all this while I was still with you? **6**And you also know what it is that is keeping this man under control right now,

until the time comes for him to be unmasked. ⁷You see, the mysterious secret of lawlessness is already at work. But at the present time there is someone* who is keeping it under control. But when he is taken out of the way, ⁸then the lawless Man will be unmasked, and our Lord Jesus will kill him by the breath coming out of His mouth, and put a stop to all his lawlessness by His own appearance and presence.

⁹When this lawless Man appears, he will make use of Satan's power, to do every kind of fake miracle and false signs and wonders. ¹⁰And he will use every kind of dishonest trick to fool the people who are being destroyed, because they have never had any love for the truth in their hearts, so that they could be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them things that lead them into error, so that they will believe any lie. ¹²And in the end all those who do not believe the truth, but find their happiness in things that are wrong and dishonest, will be condemned to eternal death.

God has Chosen Us to be Saved

¹³Therefore, brothers and sisters, we must always be thanking God for you people. The Lord loves you, because God chose you to be the first ones in your city to be saved by the work of the Spirit, who makes us holy and brings us to believe the truth. ¹⁴And He called you through the Good News we brought to you, so that you can share the glory and honor that belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵And so, brothers and sisters, this means that you must stand firm and hold on to the things we have learned from the Lord and then passed on to you in our teaching, whether it was something we told you or something in our letter. ^{16a}And we're asking our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who loves us, ¹⁷to fill your hearts with courage and to strengthen you to do and say everything that is good. ^{16b}For by His love which no one deserves God has given us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope.

Keep on Praying for Us

3 Finally, brothers and sisters, keep on praying for us. And ask that the message about our Lord will spread rapidly and be held in honor, just as it was when it came to you. **2** And pray also that God will rescue us from evil and wicked men, for not all people are believers.

3 But we can always depend on our Lord. He will strengthen you and keep you safe from the Evil One. **4** And the Lord has given us confidence in you people, that you are doing and will continue to do the things we're telling you to do. **5** And I pray that the Lord will lead you to think more and more about God's love, and how patiently Christ endured all His troubles and sufferings.

Everyone Must Keep Working at Some Job

6 We're also giving you orders by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ that you must have nothing to do with any one of your brothers who is loafing around and not working, and not following the instructions we learned from the Lord and passed on to you. **7** After all, you people know how necessary it is that you follow our example, because we didn't loaf around without working when we were living there with you. **8** And we didn't take any free meals from anyone either. No indeed. You know that we were working hard and long, laboring at our trade day and night,* so that we wouldn't put an extra load on any one of you. **9** It wasn't that we don't have the authority to ask you to feed us, but we tried to make ourselves an example for you to follow.

10 In fact, when we were with you, we gave you this rule: If a person isn't willing to work, you mustn't give him any thing to eat. **11** You see, we hear that there are some people in your group who are loafing around, working at no business at all, but putting their noses into everyone else's business. **12** And so by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ we're passing along

His orders to those people and urging them to settle down and work at some trade and earn their own living.

13And the rest of you people, brothers and sisters, must keep on doing the right things and never get discouraged. **14**And if it happens that someone refuses to do what we say in this letter, be sure that everyone knows who he is, and have nothing at all to do with him, so that he will be ashamed of himself. **15**But you mustn't think of him as an enemy. Instead, you must warn him as a brother.

Closing Prayer and Benediction

16Our peace comes only from the Lord. And we're praying that He will give you His peace* at all times and in every way, and that He will be with you all.

17IN MY OWN HANDWRITING - GREETINGS FROM PAUL! THIS IS MY SPECIAL MARK IN EVERY LETTER, AND THIS IS THE WAY I WRITE IT. **18**I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY

(Written in 62 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God who is our Savior, and Christ Jesus who is our hope.

2 And I'm writing to Timothy, my true child in the faith.

God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord send you their undeserved love, mercy and peace.*

Watch Out for Those False Teachers!

3 When I was leaving for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus, so that you could pass on my orders to certain people, that they must stop teaching things that are different from what we believe and teach. **4** You must also tell them to stop thinking and talking about fairy tales* and the long, long family histories.* These are the kind of things which cause arguments instead of bringing people God's plan of salvation, which is based on faith.

5 When I gave you those orders I hoped everyone would respond with Christian love,* which comes from a clean heart, a good conscience and a genuine faith. **6** But some people have none of these Christian qualities, and so they get lost in foolish talk. **7** They want to be teachers of God's Word, but they don't understand either the words they're using or the things they're talking about with such confidence.

8 We know that the Law is a good thing if it's used in the right way. **9** And we also know that a law isn't made for the person who does what is right, but for lawbreakers, and godless, sinful people whose lives are wicked and unclean. They're made for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, **10** prostitutes, homosexuals, slave traders, liars, those who

*Helpful notes for 1 Timothy begin on page 842

lie after they swear to tell the truth, and those who do anything else that is contrary to the kind of teaching which makes us spiritually healthy. ¹¹That teaching is found in the Good News which tells about our wonderful God, who lives in eternal happiness. And He's the one who has placed this Good News in my hands to bring it to others.

The Lord has Surely Been Good to Me

¹²The one who has given me the strength to carry out my work is Christ Jesus our Lord. - And I'm thankful that He thought I was someone who can be trusted, and appointed me as one of His servants. ¹³Because before He did that I was saying nasty and insulting things about Him, and hunting Him and His followers down like animals; and I was proud of what I was doing. But He had mercy on me because I was an unbeliever and didn't know what I was doing. ¹⁴And our Lord's undeserved love overflowed and filled my heart with faith and love for the Lord Jesus.

¹⁵So here is something everyone can believe and accept without question as the truth - that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of all sinners. ¹⁶But Christ Jesus treated me with such mercy because He was going to use me, the worst of all sinners, to show how extremely patient He is, making me an example for those people later on who were going to believe in Him and have eternal Life. ¹⁷And so the honor and glory belong to the eternal and unseen King of the Universe who cannot die, the only God. Yes, it really does!

More Orders

¹⁸Timothy, my child, I'm giving you this order which repeats what some of God's prophets said to you a long time ago. You must keep on fighting your good battle. And you must use these orders as a weapon, ^{19a}and hold fast to your faith and your good conscience. Some people ^{20a}like Hymenaeus and Alexander ^{19b}have refused to listen to their conscience, and have wrecked their faith, ^{20b}and I have handed them over to Satan, so

that they will learn not to say things which are insulting to God.

2 First of all then, I'm urging you to keep on offering prayers, requests, petitions and thanksgivings for everyone. **2** And remember to pray for the kings and all those in high positions, so that we can live a quiet and peaceful life, doing everything in a godly and holy way. **3** This is good, and pleases God our Savior, **4** who wants all people to be saved and come to a full knowledge* of the truth. **5** You see, there's only one God, and only one middleman between God and men. This man is Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom to set all people free. And this is God's message to all people of all times. **7** This is also why God appointed me as His messenger and apostle. I was to spread this message and be a faithful and truthful teacher for the people of the other nations.* And I'm not lying when I say this. I'm telling the truth.

Some Rules about the Worship Services

8 And since this is my job, I want men who live God-pleasing lives to do the praying in every congregation, and not be angry or quarreling when they pray.

9 And I also want the women to dress themselves in a modest and sensible way, with the proper kind of clothing. They mustn't try to fix themselves up with fancy hair styles, gold jewelry, pearls and expensive clothes. **10** Instead, they must fill their lives with good deeds, which is the right thing for women to do who claim to be worshiping God.

11 A woman must listen quietly to the one who is teaching, as one who has full respect for the teacher's authority. **12** And I won't allow a woman to explain the Bible in the services, or to have authority over a man. My rule is that she must remain silent. **13** After all, God made Adam first, and then Eve. **14** And Adam wasn't fooled by the devil, but his wife was completely fooled and broke God's Law. **15** But she would be saved through the birth of the Child,* as all women will be, if they hold on to their faith and live sensible lives

filled with Christian love* and holiness. **3** And this is something everyone can believe.

Pick Good Men for Your Pastors

If a man wants to be a pastor, he has his heart set on a fine job which requires a good man. **2** And therefore the pastor must be a man no one can find fault with. He must have only one wife,* and be a man who never drinks too much. He must also be a sensible and well-behaved person, one who is kind to travelers who need a place to stay and something to eat, and a man who knows how to teach. **3** He can't be a drunkard, or one who loves money, or one who settles his arguments with his fists, but a man who is easy to get along with, and not quarrelsome. **4** He must be a man who manages his own family well, seeing to it that his children obey him and treat him with full respect. **5** For if a man doesn't know how to manage his own family, how will he ever take care of God's church? **6** And a pastor mustn't be a man who has just recently become a believer, so that he won't be blinded with pride and receive the same punishment as the devil. **7** He must also be a man whom the people outside the church speak well of, so that he won't fall into one of the devil's traps, or have people saying insulting things about him.

Choose Helpers Carefully

8 The same rules apply for the helpers*. They must be men whom everybody respects, and not the kind who talk out of both sides of their mouths. They mustn't be heavy drinkers, or greedy to make money in a dishonest way. **9** And they must always hold fast with a clear conscience to the secret truth* we all believe. **10** But these men must also be tested before they are chosen. And then if no one finds any fault with them, you can let them serve as helpers.

11 The same rules apply for the women who serve as helpers. They must be women whom everybody respects, and not the kind who gossip. And they must

be women who never drink too much, and who can be trusted at all times.

12The men who serve as helpers must have only one wife, and be men who manage their children and their own households well. **13**And it's true that those who do their work well will win a high position for themselves, and their faith in Christ Jesus will give them great confidence.

Our Business is to Spread the Good News

14bI'm hoping to come and see you soon. **15a**But if I don't get there right away, **14a**I'm writing you this letter **15b**so that you will know how people who belong to God's family must behave. For this family is the Church of the living God, and the pillar which holds up the truth. **16**And everyone must agree that our religion has a great secret to make known about

"the One who appeared with a human body.

The Spirit has declared him to be without sin,
and the angels have seen Him.

The news about Him has been spread
among the nations,

People all over the world have come to
believe in Him,

and He has been taken back up to heaven
to live in glory and honor".*

A Picture of the World Later on

4 The Spirit says clearly that later on some people will lose their faith as they listen to the teachings of demons and false prophets who claim to have the Spirit. **2**Such false prophets are liars who pretend to be teaching the truth, and their consciences are dead, as if they had been burned with a hot iron. **3**They're trying to stop people from getting married, and are telling them to stay away from some kinds of food,* even though God created these foods to be eaten with thanksgiving by the believers and those who have come to a full knowledge of the truth. **4**For everything God created was good, and nothing we receive with

thanksgiving is to be thrown away, ⁵because it's made clean by God's Word and prayer.

Further Instructions

⁶If you give the brothers and sisters this information, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus. And you must continue to feed yourself on the truths which we believe, and which are a part of the good teaching which you have followed faithfully. ⁷But keep away from those godless fairy tales* which old women tell to entertain the children, and keep on training yourself to live a godly life. ⁸Remember that exercises for the body are of some small value, but godliness is valuable in every way, since it promises life right now as well as Life in the next world. ⁹And this is something everyone can believe and accept without question as the truth. ¹⁰And we're working and struggling to get people to do just that, because our hope is in the living God who is the Savior of all men and women, and especially those who are believers. ¹¹Pass these things along to the others as a part of your teaching.

Be a Good Example

¹²No one must look down on you because you're a young man. But you must try to become an example for the believers by what you say and how you live. You must show them what Christian love and faith and purity really are. ¹³Until I get there, spend your time reading and explaining the Bible to the people, and urging them to live as God says. ¹⁴And don't fail to use the spiritual gift God gave you when the prophets spoke about you and the pastors put their hands on you. ¹⁵Keep on thinking about these things, and make them your guide every day, so that everyone can see how you're growing and advancing. ¹⁶Keep a close watch on yourself and on what you're teaching. If you keep on doing all these things, you will save both yourself and those who are listening to you.

On Your Relationships with the Members

5 You mustn't speak harshly to an older man, but urge him to do what you want as if he were your father. And urge the younger men like brothers, **2**the older women like mothers, and the younger women like sisters, with nothing but pure thoughts in your mind.

The Widow Problem

3Give the widow's pension to those women who really have no one to take care of them. **4**But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they must learn is that they must carry out their religious duty to their own family and repay their parents and grandparents for what they have received. After all, this is something which pleases God. **5**You see, a real widow who is left all alone in the world puts her trust in God and continues to pray and ask for God's help day and night. **6**But the widow who lives just to enjoy herself is dead, even though she's still alive. **7**Pass these orders along also, so that no one will find any fault with that congregation. **8**And tell them that if a person doesn't take care of his relatives, and especially the members of his own family, he's showing that he really isn't a Christian any longer. Such a person is worse than an unbeliever.

9A widow must never be put on the list* if she's less than sixty years old. And she must never have had more than one husband at one time.* **10**She must also be well-known for her good deeds. And to get her name on the list, a widow must have been a good mother to her family, given strangers who are traveling a place to stay and something to eat, washed the feet of God's people, helped those who were in trouble, and spent her time doing every kind of good deed.

11But don't put the younger widows on the list, for when their desire for a husband becomes stronger than their desire to serve Christ, they want to get married. **12**And then they will fall under God's judgment, because they have broken the promise they

made earlier. **13**And besides, the young widows often get into the habit of not working and running around from house to house. And it isn't only that they don't do any work, but they also get to babbling about a lot of silly things and putting their noses into other people's business, and talking about things they shouldn't talk about at all. **14**So I want the younger widows to get married and have children and take care of their homes. Then they won't give our enemies any chance to say anything bad about us. **15**You see, some young widows have already turned away to follow Satan.

16And if any woman in the congregation has widows in her family, she must help them, and the load mustn't fall on the church, so that the church can help those widows who have no one to take care of them.

Pastors

17Pastors who do good work as leaders of the congregation must be given the honor they deserve and also some pay, especially those who work hard spreading the Good News and teaching the Bible. **18**After all, the Bible says, "You mustn't tie up the mouth of the ox that is beating the grain off the stalks",⁺ and "The worker must be paid for his work".⁺

19Pay no attention to any report that a pastor has done something wrong unless there are "two or three people who saw him do it".⁺ **20**But when pastors do something sinful, you must show them their sin in front of everyone, so that the rest of the people will also be afraid to do such things.

21I'm calling on God and Christ Jesus and His chosen angels to be my witnesses when I tell you that you must make these rules apply to everyone in an equal way, without doing any favors for anyone. **22**And don't make anyone a pastor too quickly.

⁺Verses quoted in 1 Timothy are on page 879

Never take part in other people's sins, but keep yourself pure. ²³Because of your stomach trouble and your many other illnesses, you must stop drinking water, and drink a little wine instead.

²⁴Some people's sins are easily seen and cause them to be punished, but the sins of other people aren't known for quite some time. ²⁵In the same way, good deeds are easily seen, but those that aren't good can't be kept hidden forever.

The Slaves

6 All those Christians who are slaves must think of their masters as people who should be given full honor and respect, so that no one will say insulting things about God and His teaching. ²And those who have masters who are believers mustn't think that they don't have to show their masters the proper respect because they are brothers. Instead, they must work all the harder for their masters, because those who are getting the benefit of their work are believers whom they love. You must keep on teaching these things and urging the people to follow them.

False Teaching and True Riches

³The things our Lord Jesus Christ taught are the teachings which make us spiritually healthy and lead people to live godly lives. And if it's true that someone has come into your group who is teaching something different from what Jesus taught, ⁴that person is blinded with pride and knows nothing at all. He has a sick mind which thinks only about quarreling and arguing. And such arguments produce jealousy, quarrels, insults, evil suspicions, ⁵and constant arguments between people whose minds are completely destroyed, and who have lost all knowledge of the truth.

Such people think religion is a way to get rich. ⁶And of course religion is a great way to get rich, if a person is satisfied with what he has, and doesn't feel that he needs any more. ⁷After all, we brought nothing

into the world, and therefore we can't carry anything out either. ⁸And so if we have food and clothing, we must be satisfied with that, and not feel that we need any more. ⁹But those who want to get rich are always falling into temptation and into a trap. And their hearts are always being filled with many sinful desires that are both foolish and harmful, since they drag people down into eternal death and destruction. ¹⁰You see, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil things. And in their desire to get rich, some people have lost their faith and have wounded themselves in many painful ways.

Run so as to Win Eternal Life

¹¹But as a man of God, you must stay away from things like this. And you must keep on trying to be perfectly holy, and live a godly life, and be filled with faith and Christian love.* You must also try to patiently hold on to your faith no matter what happens, and be kind and gentle to others. ¹²God has called you to have and enjoy eternal Life, and you made a good confession of your faith in front of many witnesses, showing that you have this Life. And now you must firmly hold on to it, and keep on doing your very best in the great game* of faith.

¹³I'm calling on God who gives life to everything, and Christ Jesus, who made His fine confession before Pontius Pilate, to be my two witnesses when I say this - ¹⁴you must keep this commandment perfectly until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes back, so that no one can find any fault with you. ¹⁵And the one who will bring about His return at the proper time is the one supreme Ruler who lives in eternal happiness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶He alone will never die, and He lives in such light that no one can draw near to Him. No human being has ever seen Him or is able to see Him, and He has eternal honor and power. Yes, He really does!

Advice for Those Who are Rich

17 Pass the orders along to those who are rich in this present world that they must stop thinking they're so much better than others, and that they must not put their trust in such a shaky thing as riches. Instead, tell them to put their trust in God, who richly gives us everything for our enjoyment. **18** And tell them to do things that are good, and be rich in good works, and good givers who are always ready to share with others. **19** By doing these things they will be storing up for themselves something that will be a good foundation for the future, so that they will have the life that is really Life.*

Final Instructions

20 My dear Timothy, take good care of that which God has placed in your hands to hold on to and pass along to others. And stay away from the godless foolishness and arguments of what is falsely called "Knowledge".* **21** For those people who claim to be experts in this "Knowledge" have completely lost their faith.

I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY GOD'S UNDESERVED LOVE.*

PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

(Written from Rome in 66 or 67 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Paul, whom God chose to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, in keeping with His promise of Life, which is to be found in Christ Jesus.

2 And I'm writing to my own dear child Timothy. God our Father and Christ Jesus our Lord send you their undeserved love, mercy and peace.*

I'd Like to See You again, if Possible

3 I'm always remembering you in my prayers, day and night. And as I think about you, I thank my God whom I'm serving with a clear conscience, as all of my family in the past have done. **4** I remember how you cried the last time I saw you, and I'm very anxious to see you, because this would fill my heart with joy. **5** I also remember your pure and genuine faith, the same faith that filled the heart of your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And I'm sure your heart is still filled with it also.

Keep on Serving the Lord Faithfully!

6 This is why I'm reminding you now to fan into full flame that gift God gave you when I put my hands on you.* **7** You see, God hasn't given us a spirit which makes us cowards. No indeed. He had given us a spirit who fills us with power and Christian love and good sense. **8** And so you mustn't be ashamed to tell others about our Lord, or be ashamed of me, His prisoner, either. Instead, you must make use of God's power and join me in suffering for the Good News.

9 For God has saved us and called us to be His holy people. And it wasn't because of the things we have done that He did this, but because this was what He

*Helpful notes for 2 Timothy begin on page 844

decided to do, and because of His undeserved love which He gave us through Christ Jesus before the beginning of the world. ¹⁰And now He has made everything clear to us through the birth and life of Christ Jesus our Savior, who has put an end to death, and through the Good News has shown us all about Life, and freedom from sin and decay.

¹¹And this is what God appointed me to do when He called me to be an apostle and sent me out to bring people this Good News and teach them all about it.

¹²This is also why I'm suffering like this.* But I'm not ashamed of it, because I know the person I believe in, and I'm absolutely sure that He is able to take good care of what I have given Him to keep for me until that Day.*

¹³The things I taught you will make you spiritually strong and healthy, and you must make these things the pattern for your life and hold on to them, using your faith and the love which Christ Jesus brought to us. ¹⁴And take good care of that wonderful gift God has placed in your hands to hold onto and pass on to others, using the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

The News from Asia

¹⁵You know that everyone in the province of Asia has turned away from me,* including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶And I pray that the Lord will show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus, because he has cheered me up many times. And he was never ashamed that I'm in prison. ¹⁷In fact, whenever he came to Rome, he searched everywhere for me until he found me. ¹⁸And you know very well all the things he did to help me in Ephesus. I pray that the Lord will see to it that he will be treated with mercy and kindness on that Day.*

Be a Good Soldier of the Lord Jesus!

2 And therefore my child, you must be strengthened by God's undeserved love which we see in Christ

Jesus. ²And you must take those things you have heard me tell many other people and place them as a holy trust in the hands of faithful people who will then be able to teach others.

³You must also take your share of sufferings, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴When a man is serving in the army, he doesn't get tangled up in the everyday activities of making a living, because his aim is to please his commanding officer. ⁵And also if a man is taking part in an athletic contest, he'll never win the prize if he doesn't follow the rules. ⁶And the farmer who does the hard work must get the first share of the harvest. ⁷Think about what I'm saying, for the Lord will help you to understand everything.

We must Remain Faithful to Our Lord

⁸Always remember "Jesus Christ, a member of David's family, who was raised back to life from the dead".* This is what I tell people when I bring them the Good News. ⁹And because I'm doing this, I'm always being mistreated, even to the point of having chains on my feet like a criminal. But God's Word isn't in chains. ¹⁰And that's why I'm patiently holding on to my faith, and I'm doing it for the sake of the people God has chosen, so that they can also obtain the salvation which is found only in Christ Jesus, and brings a person eternal glory and honor.

¹¹Here's something everyone can believe -

"Since we have died with Him,
we shall also live with Him.*

¹²Since we're patiently holding on to our faith,
we shall also rule with Him.

If we ever say that we don't want anything
to do with Him,
He will also say that He doesn't want anything
to do with us.*

¹³It's true that we are not faithful,
but He always remains faithful,*
because He can't break His promise".*

How to be a Good Servant of God

14Keep on reminding the people about these things, calling on God to be your witness. Tell them that they must stop arguing about the meanings of words.* It doesn't do any good, and it ruins those who are listening.

15Try to show God that you're a truly good servant, a workman who has nothing to be ashamed of, a man who speaks and teaches God's truthful Word.

16And you must stay away from godless and foolish talk, because that makes people more and more ungodly.

17and such talk will spread like an ugly sore that eats away the flesh. Hymenaeus and Philetus are good examples of this. **18**They're the kind of men who have wandered away from the truth, and they are ruining the faith of some believers by saying that the dead have already come back to life. **19**However God's solid foundation stands firm, and these words are written on it - "The Lord knows those who belong to Him",* and "Everyone who says he belongs to the Lord's family must turn away from things that are wrong".*

20In a rich man's house some of the things they use are made of gold and silver, while other things are made of wood and clay. So some of them are used for big parties, while others are for everyday use.

21And so if a person keeps himself clean from all this godless talk, he will be like a plate which is used for big parties, since he will be set aside for God's use, and he will be useful to his Master, since he is always ready to do every kind of good work.

22You must also stay away from things that stir up sinful desires in the hearts of young people. And along with all those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, you must make it your goal to be perfectly holy,* with a heart filled with faith, Christian love* and peace.*

23And keep away from foolish arguments with uneducated people, because you know that such arguments

start people quarreling, ²⁴and the Lord's slave mustn't be quarreling. Instead, he must be kind and gentle towards everyone, and be a good teacher who patiently puts up with whatever troubles come his way. ²⁵And he must correct his opponents in a kind and gentle way, hoping that God will lead them to change their minds and their way of living, and bring them to a full knowledge* of the truth. ²⁶In that way they will come to their senses again and escape from the devil's trap, since the devil has taken them captive and is forcing them to do what he wants.

A Description of the Last Days

³ You must know that in the last days* there will be some bad times. ²You see, at that time people will be thinking only of themselves, and they will have a great love for money. They will be conceited, always bragging about themselves, saying insulting things about others, and disobedient to their parents, ungrateful and unholy. ³They will have no love for anyone else, and they will never lay aside their hatred. They will say false and harmful things about others, and will be completely lacking in self-control, so that they will live like wild animals, with no love for anything that is good. ⁴They will betray their friends, and live wild, reckless lives. They will be blinded with pride, and will love pleasure more than they love God. ⁵Some will appear to be godly people, but they will show no power of godliness in their lives. Keep away from such people.

⁶You see, it's men like this who go into people's homes and make slaves of silly women who are loaded down with sins, and whose lives are controlled by all kinds of sinful desires. ⁷Such women are always trying to learn, but they're never able to come to a full knowledge of the truth.*

⁸Men like this are fighting against the truth, in exactly the same way that Jannes and Jambres fought against Moses.* Their minds have been completely destroyed by sin, and their faith is completely false.

9But they won't get very far. Like Jannes and Jambres, everyone will see clearly how crazy they are.

Hold Fast to the Things You have Learned

10But you are a man who has followed my teaching and my way of living. You have the same plans and goals I have, and the same faith and Christian love. You have learned from me to be patient, and to hold on to your faith through all kinds of troubles. **11**You know all about my sufferings and the terrible things people did to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra,* and all the hateful and cruel things I have put up with. But the Lord has rescued me from all these things.

12And you know that all those who make up their minds to live a godly life as believers in Christ Jesus will be hated and mistreated by others. **13**And evil men and clever thieves will get worse and worse, leading people astray and being led astray themselves.

14But you must stick with the things you have learned and have come to believe in, since you know who your teachers were. **15**And also because ever since you were a small child you have known the holy Bible, which can give you the wisdom which brings you salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

16Every word in the Bible was breathed into the writers' minds by God, and every word is useful, either in teaching us something, or showing us our sins, or correcting our faults, or showing us how to live in the right way, **17**so that the person who belongs to God's family will be a complete Christian who is fully equipped to do every kind of good work.

4 I'm calling on God to be my witness of what I'm telling you now, and also on Christ Jesus, who is going to come again so that everyone can see Him to judge the living and the dead, and set up His Kingdom. **2**You must broadcast God's message! And always stay at it, whether it seems to be the right time to do it or not. Show people their sins! Scold them and comfort them! But always be patient and explain

God's Word to them.

³You see, the time will come when people will refuse to listen to the kind of teaching which makes us spiritually healthy. Instead, they will follow their own sinful desires and find lots of teachers who will tell them what their ears are itching to hear. ⁴And then they will shut their ears to the truth and turn to fairy tales.*

⁵But you must keep a clear head at all times. Put up with your sufferings without complaining. Do your work of spreading the Good News, and stay with it until that work is finished.

Personal News

⁶And now I'll talk about myself. I have come to the point where my lifeblood is ready to be poured out like a drink-offering,* and the time has come for me to leave this world. ⁷I have played a good game. I have run the full distance, and I have held on to my faith. ⁸And all that's left now is to receive the crown which the Lord will give me on that Day,* when He makes me perfect and free from all sin. And since the Lord is an honest judge, He won't give this prize only to me, but to all those who love to think about the time when He will come back again so that everyone will see Him.

Personal Instructions and News

⁹Please try to come and see me as soon as you can. ¹⁰You see, Demas has left me. He fell in love with this present world and went to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus went to Dalmatia. ¹¹Luke is the only one who is here with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, because he can help me in my work. ¹²Oh yes, I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. ¹³And when you come, bring my heavy cloak which I left with Carpus in Troas, and also my books, especially the ones made of skin.*

14Alexander the metalworker* has done a lot of bad things to me, but "the Lord will pay him back for the things he has done".⁺ **15**You must also be on your guard against him, because he has always hated everything we have said.

16When I defended myself at my first hearing, no one was there to help me. Everyone deserted me. I pray that God won't count it against them. **17**But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that I could tell the Good News in all its fullness, and people from all the other nations* could hear it. And He also "rescued me from the Lion's mouth".⁺ **18**And now the Lord will rescue me from every evil thing that comes along, and bring me safely into His heavenly Kingdom. To Him belongs the glory and honor forever and ever. Yes, it really does!

Personal Greetings and News

19Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, and Onesiphorus and his family. **20**Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus in Miletus, because he was sick.

21Please try to come before winter.

Eubulus sends you his greetings, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.

22I'M PRAYING THAT THE LORD WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY GOD'S UNDESERVED LOVE.*

⁺Verses quoted in 2 Timothy are on page 879

PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS

(Written in 62 A.D.)*

1 ^{1a}This letter is from Paul, one of God's slaves and Jesus Christ's apostles.

⁴And I'm writing to Titus, my true child, since we both have the same faith.

God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.*

^{1b}I have the faith found in God's chosen people, and a full knowledge of the truth of our religion, ²which is centered on the hope of eternal Life, which God promised before the beginning of time (and God never lies). ³And at the proper times God let the world know what He had to say by giving His message to the prophets. And by the command of God our Savior this message has now been placed in my hands as an apostle.

Carry Out My Orders!

⁵I left you there in Crete to get the things I wasn't able to take care of all straightened out. I also gave you orders to appoint pastors in every town, ⁶but only if they can find men who can't be accused of doing anything wrong, and who have only one wife,* and children who are believers and are never accused of being wild or disobedient. ⁷After all, since a pastor is in charge of God's work, he must be a man whom no one can find any fault with. He mustn't be the kind of man who must always have his own way, or who quickly loses his temper. And he mustn't be a drunkard, or one who settles his arguments with his fists, or be greedy to make money in a dishonest way.

⁸Instead, he must be kind to people who are traveling

*Helpful notes for Titus begin on page 846

and need a place to stay and something to eat, and be a man who loves good things, a sensible man who does what is right and God-pleasing, and a man who keeps his feelings and desires under control. ⁹He must also be a man who holds firmly to the message people can depend on, as we have learned it, so that he will be able to strengthen and encourage others with the kind of teaching which makes us spiritually healthy, and also able to show those who speak against our teaching how wrong they are.

Do Something about Those False Teachers!

¹⁰You see, there are many people who will not obey what God says, especially those Jews who say that all believers must be circumcised.* They say a lot of foolish things and lead others astray. ¹¹You must try to stop all their talking, for they're the kind of people who are ruining whole families by teaching things which should never be taught. And they're doing this to make money! What a disgraceful thing to do!

¹²And one of their own prophets once said, "Cretans are always liars, wicked wild animals who fill their bellies without doing any work".* ¹³And what he said is true.

Therefore you must give those false prophets a good scolding and show them where they're wrong, so that they will have a healthy faith, ¹⁴and won't be thinking about Jewish fairy tales* and commandments and rules laid down by men who have turned away from the truth.

¹⁵For those who are clean, everything is clean, but for those who are unclean and unbelieving, nothing is clean, because their minds and consciences are black with sin. ¹⁶They claim that they know God, but their actions show that this isn't true. They're filthy, disgusting and disobedient people, and unable to do anything good.

General Instructions for the People

2 But you must keep on talking about things which agree with the kind of teaching which makes us spiritually healthy. **2**Tell the older men not to drink too much, and to be sensible men whom everyone respects. And tell them to keep themselves spiritually healthy so far as their faith and Christian love* are concerned, and in their ability to hang on to their faith in times of trouble.

3In the same way tell the older women that their lives must show that they're holy people. They mustn't be the kind of women who say false and harmful things about others, or alcoholics who can't stay away from the wine bottle. And they must be women who teach others what is good, **4**so that they will encourage the younger women to love their husbands and children, **5**and be sensible and pure, good homemakers, and obedient to their husbands, so that people won't be saying insulting things about God's Word.

6In the same way you must also urge the younger men to be sensible, **7**and be an example to them in every way by doing good things. And when you're explaining the Bible to the people, you must speak only the truth and do it in a way that will make your hearers respect you. **8**Yes, every word you speak must be so true that no one can find fault with it, so that any enemy will be put to shame, since he won't have anything bad to say about us.

9And you must urge the slaves to be obedient to their masters, trying to please them in everything they do. Tell them that they mustn't talk back to their masters, **10**or steal from them. Instead, they must try to show their masters how faithful they are, so that everything they do will make our God and Savior's teaching look good.

11You see, God's undeserved love has appeared right before our eyes, bringing salvation for all men and women. **12**And it also teaches us that we must say

"no" to the godlessness and the sinful desires of the world, and live sensible, holy and godly lives in this present world, ¹³as we wait for the time when that hope which makes us truly happy will come true. And that will be when Jesus Christ, our great God and Savior, appears in all His shining heavenly beauty. ¹⁴For He died in our place in order to set us free from every sin and make us perfectly clean people who belong to Him alone and are eager to do good things.

¹⁵You must keep on telling the people about these things, and encouraging them, and showing them their sins when they're wrong, using your full authority. And you must live so that nobody will look down on you.

³ You must also keep on reminding the people that they must obey the rulers and authorities who have been placed over them, and also that they must always be ready to do everything that is good. ²Tell them that they mustn't say insulting things about anyone or be quarrelsome. Instead, they must be easy to get along with, and show all kindness and understanding to everybody.

God has Saved Us because He Loves Us

³You see, there was a time when we also were foolish and disobedient. We were being led astray, and were living as slaves of all kinds of sinful desires and pleasures, and in hatred and jealousy. People hated us, and we hated each other.

⁴But then the kindness of God our Savior and His love for all people appeared in a way that they could see it, ⁵and He saved us. But it wasn't because of any things we had done, trying to be perfectly holy* It was because of His mercy that He saved us, through the washing by which the Holy Spirit brought about our new birth and made us new creatures. ⁶And God has kept on pouring out His Holy Spirit on us in His rich and full way through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that He could accept us as perfectly holy by His

undeserved love and make us His children who are going to receive the eternal Life we're hoping for. ⁸And this is something everyone can believe. I also want you to show the people how important these things are, so that those who believe in God will always be thinking about doing good things, and things that are truly fine and helpful to other people.

Stay away from False Teachers!

⁹But stay away from foolish arguments and family histories,* and from quarrels and arguments about the Law, for these things are worthless and useless. ¹⁰And a man who causes divisions by teaching things that are false must be warned once or twice, and after that, have nothing more to do with him. ¹¹For then you know that he's the kind of a person who has lost his way and is living in sin, and that he's destroying himself.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, try to come and meet me in Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

¹³Do whatever you can to give Zenas the scribe* and Apollos a good start when they leave town, so that they will have everything they need. ¹⁴And our people must also learn to spend their time doing the kind of good things that will help others when they are in great need. By doing this their lives will be filled with the fruit of faith.

¹⁵All those who are here with me send you their greetings.

Greet those who love us as fellow believers.

I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY GOD'S UNDESERVED LOVE!*

PAUL'S LETTER TO PHILEMON

(Written from Rome in 61 A.D.)*

¹This letter is from Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and our brother Timothy.

And I'm writing to Philemon,* our dear friend and fellow worker, ²and the church that meets in your house, and our sister Apphia, and our fellow soldier Archippus.

³God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ send you their love which no one deserves, and their peace.*

How Thankful I am for You

⁴I'm always thanking my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵because I keep on hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus, and how much you love all of God's people.* ⁶And I'm always praying that the full knowledge of every good thing we have will make you want to share your faith in Christ. ⁷You see, brother Philemon, your Christian love has made me very happy and has strengthened my courage, because you have removed the fears and worries of God's people, and have made them feel much better.

I Have Something to Ask

⁸And so I feel sure that I could tell you what your Christian duty is and order you to do it. ⁹But instead, I'm writing to you as an old man named Paul, who right now is also a prisoner of Christ Jesus. That's what I really am. And I'm asking you to do something because of your Christian love.*

¹⁰I'm making this request for this child of mine, Onesimus. I became his father* while I was here in prison. ¹¹There was a time when he was of no use to you, but now he's useful,* both to you and to me.

*Helpful notes for Philemon begin on page 847

12That's the man I have sent back to you, and with him I have sent my heart.

13I really wanted to keep him here with me, so that he could take your place and take care of me while I'm here in prison for spreading the Good News. **14**But I didn't want to do anything without knowing that it would be all right with you. That is, I don't want you to be doing me this favor because you're being forced to do it, but of your own free will.

15You see it just might be that Onesimus was separated from you for this short while so that you could have him back forever, **16**but not as a slave any longer. Now he's more than a slave. He's a dear brother, especially to me. And how much more he must mean to you, both as your property and as a believer in the Lord.

17Since you think of me as your partner therefore, you must welcome him back as you would welcome me. **18**And since he has done you some wrong and owes you something, charge it to my account. **19**Notice that I have written this with my own hand - I (PAUL) WILL PAY YOU BACK. And I'm not going to tell you that you also owe me something - yourself.*

20Yes, brother, I really hope that the Lord will lead you to help* me. Please do this to make me feel better, for Christ's sake. **21**I have written you this letter feeling absolutely sure that you will do what I'm asking. Yes, I know that you will do even more than I'm asking.

22And at the same time get your guest room ready for me, for I'm hoping that all your prayers will lead God to send me back to you.

Greetings

23Epaphras,* my fellow prisoner in the service of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. **24**So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

25I'M PRAYING THAT YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE UNDESERVED LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

A LETTER TO SOME JEWISH CHRISTIANS

(Probably written about 60 or 61 A.D.)*

God's Son is Much Greater than the Prophets

1 A long time ago God spoke to our forefathers many times and in many different ways through the prophets. **2**But now in these last days* He spoke to us through His Son.

God used His Son to create the whole universe, and in the end it will all belong to Him. **3** The brightness of God's heavenly beauty shines from His face, and He gives us a perfect picture of God, which He really is. He holds the whole universe in its place by His powerful word. And after He had washed away our sins, He sat down at God's right hand in heaven.

The Son is Much Greater than the Angels

4And so the Son turned out to be a much greater person than the angels,* and for this same reason His Father gave Him a much greater name than theirs.* **5**After all, to which one of the angels did God ever say,

"You are My Son.

Today I have become Your Father"?⁺

And again,

"I will be His Father,

and He will be My Son"?⁺

6And again, when He brought His first-born Son into the world, He said, "All God's angels must worship Him."⁺

7And when God speaks about the angels, He says,

"He makes His angels winds.

He makes His servants burning flames".⁺

*Helpful notes for Hebrews begin on page 848

⁺ Verses quoted in Hebrews are on page 879

- 8** But when He speaks about His Son, He says,
 "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever,
 and doing the right thing will be the mark*
 of Your royal authority.
- 9** You love what is right and hate what is wrong,
 and this is why your God has anointed You*
 with the "oil" of joy in a far greater measure
 than He has given to Your friends".⁺
- 10** He also says,
 "You are the one, O Lord, who created the earth
 in the beginning,
 and the heavens are the work of Your hands.
- 11** They will be destroyed,
 But You will remain forever.
 Yes, all men and women will grow old like a cloak.
- 12** and You will roll them up like a coat.
 They will be changed like a robe.
 But You are the 'One who is',*
 and Your life will never come to an end".⁺
- 13** But to which one of the angels did God ever say,
 "Sit down here at My right hand
 until I make your enemies a footstool for
 your feet"?⁺
- 14** Aren't all the angels spirits who serve God, and
 are sent out to help those who are going to receive
 the salvation which God has set aside to give to His
 children?

We Must Pay Attention to What the Son Tells Us

2 And this is why we must pay the closest attention
 to the things we have heard, so that we won't drift
 away from them. ²After all, we know that the mes-
 sage God gave through the angels was dependable
 and true, and every violation or failure to obey that
 Law brought down well-deserved punishment. ³So
 how are we ever going to escape if we pay no attention
 to a salvation as great as this? Our Lord was the first
 one who spoke about this salvation, and those who heard
 Him have clearly told us exactly what He said. ⁴And

all along God has been showing us that what He said is true by doing signs and wonderful things and all kinds of miracles, and passing out the gifts of the Holy Spirit just exactly as He wanted.*

Jesus is the Source of Our Salvation

⁵But when we talk about the world to come, we see that God didn't make the angels the rulers of that world. ⁶For there's a place where one of the prophets said,

"What is a man or woman that You should be thinking about them?

or the Son of Man* that You should care about Him?

⁷ You have made them lower than the angels for a little while,

You have crowned them with glory and honor.

⁸ You have made them ruler over everything".⁺

You see, when God made them "ruler over everything", He didn't leave a single thing that wasn't put under their control. At the present time, however, we don't see everything under their control yet. ⁹But we do see Jesus, who "was made lower than the angels for a little while", so that He could die for every man and woman. And we see Him "crowned with glory and honor," because He suffered and died for them. And it was God's undeserved love which made it possible for Him to do this.

¹⁰You see, Jesus is the one who created all things, and He also keeps the universe going. So it was only right that God should make Jesus the perfect Man.* For He is the One who has brought many sons and daughters into the glories of heaven, since He made their salvation possible by His sufferings and death.*

¹¹And so it's true that the One who makes people holy and those who are being made holy all have the same Father. And that's why Jesus isn't ashamed to call them His brothers and sisters.

¹²He says,

"I will tell My brothers and sisters about You.

I will sing Your praises in the midst of the congregation".⁺

13 And again He says,

"I will certainly put My trust in God".⁺

And again,

"Here I am, with the children God has given Me".⁺

14 Therefore since God's children all have bodies of flesh and blood, Jesus also had the same kind of a body, so that by dying He could destroy the devil, who has the power of death, **15** and set free all those people who were forced to live as the devil's slaves all their lives by their fear of death.

16 You see, He certainly isn't giving this help to the angels. "He's helping the children of Abraham".^{*}

17 And therefore He had to become like His brothers in every way, so that He could be a merciful and faithful Head Priest who could bring their prayers and gifts to God, and make the sacrifice for the people's sins that would take away God's holy anger. **18** You see, because He suffered when He was put to the test, He's able to help those who are being put to the test now.

Jesus is Much Greater than Moses, the Great Prophet

3 My Christian brothers and sisters, you have all been called to be members of God's family. And therefore you must keep on thinking about Jesus, whom God sent as His special messenger, and whom we confess to be our Head Priest. **2** He was faithful to the one who appointed Him, just as "Moses and everyone in his house were faithful".^{*} **3** However Jesus deserves to have much more glory and honor than Moses, for the same reason that the man who builds a house has more honor than the house itself. **4** And while every house is built by some man, God has built the whole universe.

5 But Moses was a servant who was to give an exact report of everything God told him. And he and everyone else in his house faithfully did so. **6** Christ however is God's faithful Son, who is the Head of His family,^{*} and this is the family we belong to as long as we hold

on to our courage and the hope we boast about.

Don't Lose Your Promised Rest!

⁷Therefore as the Holy Spirit says,

"If you hear God's voice today,

⁸ don't refuse to obey Him and go your own way,
as your forefathers did
that time when they rebelled against Me
in the desert,

⁹ and put Me to the test to see what I would do.
And they saw what I did ¹⁰for forty years.
That's why I was angry with those people.
And I said, 'Their hearts are always taking them
on the wrong paths.

They are people who have never traveled
on My roads'.*

¹¹ And so in My holy anger I took an oath and said,
'They will never get into My place of rest'.⁺

¹²Brothers and sisters, you must watch out so that
no one of you will ever have a wicked and unbelieving
heart that will make you turn away from the living
God. ¹³Instead, you must help and encourage each
other every day, as long as it is still what the Bible
calls "today",* so that no one of you will be fooled
by sin's attractive tricks. ¹⁴For we are all Christ's
partners if we keep holding on firmly to the very end
to the confidence we had at the beginning ¹⁵by listening
to what God is saying to us -

"If you hear God's voice today,
don't refuse to obey Him and go your own way,
as your forefathers did
that time when they rebelled against Me".⁺

¹⁶For who was it who heard God speaking and then
rebelled against Him? Wasn't it all those whom Moses
led out of Egypt? ¹⁷And who was God angry with
for forty years? Wasn't it with those whose dead
bodies were scattered around in the desert?* ¹⁸And
to whom did God swear that they would never come
into His place of rest, if it wasn't those who didn't

believe in Him? ¹⁹And so we see that they weren't able to get into God's place of rest* because they didn't believe God.

⁴ And therefore since we also have God's promise that we can come into His place of rest, we're afraid that there might be some of you who will fail to get in. ²After all, we have heard the Good News, just as those old Israelites did. But when they heard this message, it didn't do them any good, because there was no faith in their hearts when they heard it. ³So the truth is that we who are believers are going to get into that place of rest, just as God says,

"And so in My holy anger I took an oath and said,
'They will never get into My place of rest!'"⁺

And He said this even though His work had been finished when He created the world. ⁴For there's a place in the Bible where He is speaking about the seventh day in this way - "And on the seventh day God rested from all His work".⁺ ⁵And then in the place we're talking about here, He says, "They will never get into My place of rest".⁺ ⁶So we know that there must be some people who will get into that place of rest, and also that those who first received the Good News didn't go in because of their unbelief.

We Must Enter Our Real Rest Now!

⁷A long time later God set a certain time for people to come in, which is called "today".* And He did this when He spoke through the prophet David, just as we have already said,

"Today if you hear God's voice,
don't refuse to obey Him and go your own way".⁺

⁸After all, if Joshua had given them rest, God wouldn't be speaking later about another time. ⁹And so there must be a time of rest waiting for God's people. ¹⁰And the one who goes into God's place of rest will also rest from his work, just as God has been resting from His. ¹¹Therefore we must do everything we can to get into that place of rest, so that none of us will

follow the example we have given and lose our faith.

12You see, God's Word is alive and active, and much sharper than any double-edged sword. And it cuts so deep that it even separates the soul from the spirit, and the joints from the bones. It also judges the thoughts and desires of the heart. **13**And there isn't one created thing which is hidden from God's eyes. Everything lies uncovered and bare before His eyes, and we must give an answer to Him for everything we do.

Jesus is Much Greater than All the Head Priests

14And since our great Head Priest is God's Son Jesus, who is now in heaven, we must hold on firmly to the faith we are telling others about. **15**You see, this Head Priest of ours isn't a person who can't feel any sympathy for us in our weaknesses, because He has been tried and tested in every way, just as we are. But He never sinned. **16**And therefore we can come joyfully to the throne of our God, whose heart is filled with love for those who don't deserve it, and there we will be given the mercy and love we don't deserve to help us when we really need it.

5 You see, every Head Priest is one of the citizens who is appointed to do for the other people all the things that have to do with God, like bringing Him their gifts and their sacrifices for their sins. **2**And because he also has his own weaknesses he's able to be kind and gentle with those who are being led astray because they don't know any better. **3**And he must also bring sacrifices to God for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the other people. **4**But no one appoints himself to this high position, because it's God who calls a man to be the Head Priest, just as He called Aaron.*

5And that's also the way it was with Christ. He didn't try to push Himself into this high position. It was God who said to Him,

"You are My Son.

Today I have become Your Father".⁺

6And as He says in another place,
 "You are a Priest forever,
 like Melchizedek".^{†*}

7During the time He lived here as a man He brought His prayers and requests to the one who could save Him from death with loud cries and tears.* And God heard His prayers because of His fear and respect for His Father. **8**Even though He was God's Son, He learned to be obedient from the things He suffered. **9**And when He had become the perfect Son, He became the creator of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him, **10**and God made Him the Head Priest, "like Melchizedek".

We Must Grow in Faith and Become Adults

11We have much more to say about all this, but it's hard to explain, because you're so slow to learn things. **12**You see, after all this time you ought to be teachers, but instead you need someone to be teaching you the simple, beginning things about God's Word all over again. Instead of eating solid food, you still have to drink milk. **13**After all, every person who is still drinking milk is a little child. He really doesn't know what God says about being perfectly holy.* **14**Solid food however is for adults who have consciences which have been trained by everyday living to tell the difference between good and bad.

1aSo let's not spend any more time on the first lessons **6**that taught us about Christ. **1c**I mean let's not be laying the foundation again by talking about changing our minds and our way of living, and turning away from dead works, and believing in God, **2**and what He taught us about baptisms, and the laying on of hands, and the dead coming back to life again, and eternal judgment. **1b**We must go on to the higher lessons. **3**And this is what we're going to do, if God allows us to do it.

4You see, Christians are people who have been brought into the light, and have tasted God's free heavenly

gift, and have received their share of the Holy Spirit. ⁵They have also had a taste of God's wonderful Word and the miraculous things of the world to come. ⁶But when such Christians fall away from their faith, it's impossible to get them to change their minds and their way of living again while they are putting God's Son on the cross again and making fun of Him.

⁷You know that God blesses the land which drinks in the many regular rains and produces crops that are useful for those who do the farming. ⁸But when it "brings forth thorns and thistles", it's no good, and "God's curse"* is hanging over it, and it will end up being burned.

⁹But even though we're speaking like this, dear friends, we're sure that your lives are filled with the better things that point to the fact that you're going to be saved. ¹⁰After all, God isn't unfair, and He won't forget what you have done. He won't forget the love you have shown to Him by doing things to help His people,* and that you're still doing such things.

^{11a}And we want each one of you to keep on showing this same eagerness to do such things to the very end, so that ^{12a}you won't become lazy, ^{11b}and your hope will come true. ^{12b}Yes, we want you to live like those people whose faith and patience will bring them all the wonderful things God has promised to give to His children.

We can Believe God's Promises

¹³You see, when God made His promises to Abraham, there wasn't anyone greater for Him to call on to witness His oath. So He called on himself.* ¹⁴"I'm telling you the truth," He said, "when I say that I will surely give you My blessing, and I will surely make your family grow very large".+ ¹⁵And Abraham waited patiently, and he got what God had promised.

¹⁶You see, people call on someone greater than themselves to witness their oaths,* and the oath guarantees that what is said is true and ends every argument.

17And so God guaranteed His promise with an oath, because He wanted to make it absolutely clear to His heirs,* who are going to receive what He has promised, that He will never change His mind. **18**So we see that God has done two unchangeable things in which He cannot lie, so that we who have come to Him for help will be greatly encouraged to hold on firmly to the hope He has set before us. **19**And this hope acts like an anchor for our souls, since it is strong and immovable and reaches all the way into the Inner Room behind the curtain,* **20**where Jesus our forerunner has already gone to serve us, since He has become the "Head Priest forever, like Melchizedek".†

Jesus is Like Melchizedek

7 You see, this man "Melchizedek was the king of Salem and a priest of the one true God. And as Abraham was coming back from the battle in which he had defeated the four kings," he met Melchizedek. "And Melchizedek asked God to bless Abraham," **2**and "Abraham gave him a tenth of everything he had taken in the battle".*

In the first place, "Melchizedek" means "the king who does what is right".* And in the second place, he was also "king of Salem", which means "the peaceful king".* **3**Nothing is said about his father or mother, and there is no record of his earlier or later family members. Nothing is said about when he was born or when he died. And therefore since he is like God's Son, he remains a priest forever.

4And so you see what a great man this Melchizedek was, since Abraham, the father of our nation, gave him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. **5**Remember that those of Levi's family who become priests have a commandment which says that they must collect a tenth of the people's income, since this is the Law. And they collect this from their own nation, even though they also are descendants of Abraham. **6**But even though Melchizedek wasn't a member of Levi's

family, he collected a tenth of Abraham's war prizes, and then he asked God to bless the man who had received God's promises. ⁷And there can't be any argument about the fact that the greater person always speaks the blessing on one of less importance.

⁸Among us today the men who are collecting the tenth are dying all the time. But the Bible speaks of the man who collected the tenth from Abraham as one who is still living. ⁹And so we could say that even Levi, who collects the tenth now, paid his tenth through Abraham, ¹⁰since he really was still in the body of his grandfather when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹Now we know that in the beginning the people of Israel received the Law through the tribe of Levi, who were the priests. And if this had been the perfect and final way to do things, what need would there have been to bring in a different priest later, who was like Melchizedek, and not from Aaron's family? ¹²But when the priestly family was changed, there also had to be a change in the Law, ¹³because the priest who was named here belonged to a different tribe, and no member of this tribe had ever brought any sacrifices to the altar. ¹⁴And of course everybody knows that our Lord is a member of the tribe of Judah, and Moses never said anything about there being any priests in this tribe.

¹⁵And now it's even clearer that the priestly family has been changed, because a different kind of priest has appeared in our midst, who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶And He didn't become a priest because He met the physical requirements of some law, but because He is filled with the power which comes from a life which can't be destroyed. ¹⁷For this is what God says about Him -

"You are a priest forever,
like Melchizedek".⁺

¹⁸And so the old rule has been cancelled, because it couldn't do the job and was of no value. ¹⁹You see, the Law has never made anything perfect. But now

God has given us something better to hope for, which brings us closer to God. ²⁰And to make things even clearer, God changed the priests with an oath. You see, some men have become priests without any oath. ²¹But when Jesus became a priest, it was done with an oath, spoken by the one who said to Him,

"The Lord has taken an oath,
and He won't change His mind.

'You are a priest forever'."[†]

²²And just as God's oath guarantees that Jesus is now the Head Priest, so Jesus is the guarantee that we have a better agreement.*

Jesus is the Priest of the Better Agreement

²³There were many men who became head priests in the past, because each one of them died, so that none of them could keep on being the Head Priest forever. ²⁴But Jesus won't give His position of Head Priest to someone else, because He is living forever. ²⁵And therefore He is always able to save those who come to God through Him, since He is always living to pray for them.

²⁶After all, this is the kind of a Head Priest we need, one who is holy, without sin, spotless, far removed from sinful men, and lifted up far above the heavens. ²⁷And he isn't like the other Head Priests, because He doesn't have to bring God sacrifices every day for His own sins first, and then for the sins of His people. Because He made just one sacrifice for all sin when He offered Himself. ²⁸You see, the Law appoints human beings who have faults and weaknesses to be Head Priests. But the words of God's oath, which He spoke after He had given the Law, appointed His Son, who has been made the perfect Head Priest forever.

⁸ The main thing I'm saying here is that we have the kind of a Head Priest who has taken His seat at the right hand of God's throne in heaven ²as a Servant in the Most Holy place of the true Tent, which the Lord set up, not some man or men.

³Every Head Priest of course is appointed to bring gifts and sacrifices to God. And so this Head Priest of ours also had to have something to bring. ⁴If He was here on earth, He wouldn't even be a priest, since we have men who are bringing the people's gifts to God as the Law requires.

⁵But these priests are serving only as a shadowy picture of the real One in heaven.* That's exactly what God told Moses when he was going to make the tent - "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern which I showed you on the mountain".†

⁶But the Priest we're talking about now has been given a much more important work to do than these other priests, for the same reason that He is also the middle-man of a better agreement which is built on better promises.

⁷After all, if that first agreement* had been perfect, there would have been no need for a second one. ⁸But God said that there was something wrong with the old one, and He placed the blame on the people of Israel when He said,

" 'Now hear this!' says the Lord. 'The time is coming when I will make a new agreement with the people of Israel, and the people of Judah.

⁹ It won't be like the agreement I made with their forefathers that day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they didn't keep their part of that agreement of Mine, and I didn't care what happened to them,' says the Lord.

¹⁰ 'But this is the agreement I will make with the people of Israel in those last days,* says the Lord.

'I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them in their hearts.

And I will be their God, and they will be My people.

- 11 Then each man won't be teaching his fellow citizen,
and each Christian won't be teaching another one,
saying,
"You must come to know the Lord,"
because they will all know Me,
from the smallest to the greatest.
- 12 For I will look in mercy on the wrong things
they have done,
and I will completely forget about their sins'."†
- 13 And by talking about a new agreement, God has made
the first one old. And anything that is growing old
and feeble will soon disappear.

The Old Worship Pointed to the Heavenly Temple

9 The first agreement had its rules for worship and
its place for worship here on earth. 2 You see, they
set up a tent.* And in the first room, which was called
the "Holy Place", were the lampstand,* the table with
the little loaves of bread which were set out for God,*
4a and a golden incense altar.* 3 Then behind the second
curtain was the room which was called the "Most Holy
Place".* 4b And the Agreement Box, which was com-
pletely covered with gold,* was in this room. In this
box there was a golden bowl filled with some of the
manna,* and Aaron's rod which budded,* and the tablets
on which the agreement was written.* 5 And on top
of the box were the beautiful angels, with their wings
spread out over the golden cover.* But right now
we can't take the time to talk about these things in
detail. 6 But this was the way the tent was built and
furnished, with the priests going into the first room
every day to perform their duties there.

7 But only the Head Priest goes into the second room,
and only once a year. And when he does, he always
takes along some blood which he offers to God for
the sins which he and the people have committed with-
out knowing they were sinning.* 8 In this way the Holy
Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy
Place had not yet been opened up as long as that first

tent was still there.

⁹And all this is a picture of what has been happening up to this present time. It's a picture of gifts and sacrifices being offered to God which can't make the worshiper perfect so far as his conscience is concerned, ¹⁰because they're only things to eat and drink and different kinds of washings, and rules which are concerned about bodily things, which we must obey until the time comes when everything will be made new.

Jesus Made a Better Sacrifice in a Better Temple

¹¹But now Christ has come as the Head Priest of the good things to come. And He has gone through that greater and more perfect Tent, which wasn't made by human hands, which means that it isn't a part of this created world. ¹²Yes, He went into the Most Holy Place. But He didn't bring in the blood of goats and calves. He brought His own blood. And He went in there just once to make one sacrifice for all sin,*since He has found a way to set us all free for all eternity.

¹³You see, in the old tent the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow are sprinkled on the people who have become "unclean", and makes their bodies clean. ¹⁴And therefore how much more will the blood of Christ do for us? Through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself to God as the perfect, spotless sacrifice* which will make our consciences clean from the things our dead, sinful bodies do, so that we can serve the living God.

¹⁵And because He did this, Jesus is the middleman through whom God has set up the new agreement. And since Jesus died to set people free from the sins they committed while living under the first agreement, those whom God has called can receive the promise that they are going to receive all the things God has set aside to give to His children in eternity. ¹⁶You see, where there's a will, there must be proof that the one who made the will has died, ¹⁷for a will goes into effect when someone dies. It's not in force while the

one who made it is still living.

18And this is why even the first agreement didn't go into effect until there was a death. **19**For after Moses had read every commandment of the Law to all the people, he took the blood of some calves and some water and sprinkled them on the Book and then on all the people with some red wool and a bunch of hyssop. **20**And as he did this he said, "This is the blood of the agreement which God has commanded you to keep".⁺ **21**And then he did the same thing with the tent and all the things used in their worship. He sprinkled them all with the blood. **22**In fact, according to the Law almost everything is made "clean" by blood, and unless some blood is poured out, there is no forgiveness.*

Jesus' Temple is Heaven Itself

23All these things about the old agreement are copies of the real thing in heaven, and they had to be made "clean" in this way. But the heavenly things are made "clean" by much better sacrifices than these. **24**You see, Christ didn't go into a temple made by human hands, which is only a picture of the real one. He went into heaven itself, where He is now standing in God's presence as our Priest.

25And He didn't go there to offer Himself as a sacrifice many times, as the Head Priest goes into the Most Holy Place every year with someone else's blood. **26**For then He would have had to suffer a great many times since the time the world was created. Instead, He appeared just once at this time when the world is coming to an end, to do away with sin by sacrificing Himself. **27**And just as death comes once to all human beings, followed by the Judgment, **28**so Christ also was offered as a sacrifice just once to take away the sins of all people. And then, after He has gotten rid of all sin, He will appear a second time to save those who are patiently waiting for Him.

10 Remember that the Law doesn't give us an exact picture of the real things.* It gives us only a shadowy picture of the good things to come. The people who live under the Law come to God bringing the same sacrifices every year, on and on forever, but these sacrifices can never make those people perfect. **2**After all, if those worshipers had been made completely clean just once, they wouldn't have had any more guilty feelings about their sins, and then wouldn't they have stopped bringing their sacrifices? **3**But the truth is that these sacrifices keep reminding the people of their sins every year, **4**because there's no way that the blood of bulls and goats can take away sins.

5And therefore when Christ was coming into the world, He said,

"You don't want a sacrifice and an offering,
but You have prepared a body for Me.

6 Whole burnt offerings and sin offerings
don't make You happy."

7 So then I said,
"Look! I'm right here!

As one of the books of the Bible says about Me,
'I have come to do what You want'."⁺

8First He says to God, "You don't want sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings, and they don't make You happy," talking about the kind of sacrifices the people are bringing, as the Law requires. **9**Then Jesus says, "Look! I have come to do what You want." So here He puts an end to the first sacrifices so that He can make the second sacrifice in their place. **10**And we are now holy and clean because Jesus Christ did what God wanted by bringing His own body as the one Sacrifice for all sin.

11So while every priest was standing there every day doing his work and bringing God the same sacrifices over and over again, which can never take away sins,

12Jesus brought one Sacrifice for sins that would last forever, and then "He sat down at God's right hand".⁺

13And He has been sitting there all this time waiting

for the time "when His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet",⁺ **14**because with one sacrifice He has made God's people* perfectly holy forever.

15And the Holy Spirit also tells us what He knows about this. And then He says,

16 " 'This is the agreement which I will make ' with them
'in those last days,'* says the Lord.

'I will put My laws in their hearts,
and I will write them in their minds.

17 And I will completely forget about their sins,
and the wrong things they have done'. "⁺

18And when a person's sins have been taken away, there's no longer any need to bring an offering for sin.

Faith In Jesus is the Only Way to Come to God

19And so my brothers and sisters, we have the confidence to go right into the Most Holy Place with no fear in our hearts because of Jesus' blood. **20**For Jesus opened up for us a new and living way* to get through that curtain. And that way is His human body.* **21**And we also have a great Head Priest who is in charge of God's house.

22Therefore we must come to God with a true heart, and with the confidence our faith gives us. For our hearts have been sprinkled and made clean, so that we have no guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.* **23**And we must hold on firmly to that hope we say we have, because the One who gave us His promise* can be trusted.

24Next we must always be thinking about how we can help one another to grow in Christian love and good works. **25**And we mustn't stop going to our meetings, the way some people are doing. Instead, we must keep on encouraging one another to come, and do this even more as you see that Day* coming closer and closer.

26You see, if we go on sinning purposely after God has given us the full knowledge of the truth, there

isn't any sacrifice left that will take away our sins. **27** Then all that's left is the frightening thought of the Judgment to come, and the fiery heat that is going to destroy God's enemies.

28 Any one who breaks Moses' Law "dies" without mercy "if there are two or three people who saw him do it".⁺ **29** But what about a person who treats God's Son like dirt under his feet, and thinks the blood of the agreement which has made him clean from his sins is something common and cheap, and insults God's loving Spirit? How much worse punishment do you think that person will deserve? **30** You see, we know who it is who said,

"Revenge is for Me. I'm the one who will pay back".⁺ and again,

"The Lord will judge His people".⁺

31 What a frightening thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!

32 Remember how things were a few years ago, right after you had first seen the light, when you patiently held on to your faith in a great struggle which brought you a lot of sufferings. **33** Sometimes you were publicly insulted and attacked, and sometimes you shared the insults and sufferings of others who were being treated in the same way. **34** Yes, you even shared the sufferings of those who were in prison, and when others took your belongings, you took it all cheerfully, knowing that you have something far better, which will also last forever.

35 Therefore you mustn't lose your courage and confidence, for it will bring you a great reward. **36** You see, you must patiently hold on to your faith so that you will do what God wants and thus receive what He has promised.

37 For in just a very little while

"the one who is coming will be here,
and He won't be slow about it.

38 And the person whose faith has made him perfectly holy in My sight will live.⁺

But if he turns back,
I will not be happy with him."

39But we aren't the kind of people who will turn back and go to eternal destruction. We're believers who will save our souls.

Faith has Always been the Only Way to God

11 Faith is being sure about things we hope for and being certain about things we can't see. **2**And it was their faith that made the early leaders of our nation famous.

3By faith we understand that the universe was created by God's Word in such a way that what we see was made out of things which didn't exist.*

4It was Abel's faith that made him bring a better sacrifice to God than Cain.* And because of his faith God accepted Abel as perfectly holy,* and He said this because of Abel's gifts. And even though he died, Abel is still speaking to us through his faith.

5It was Enoch's faith that led God to carry him away to heaven so that he never died. And "no one could find him, because God had carried him away".⁺ You see, before this happened, God had made it clear that He was pleased with Enoch. **6**But without faith it's impossible to please God, because the one who comes to God must believe that there is such a person, and that He rewards those who try to find Him.

7It was Noah's faith that led God to warn him about things which he couldn't see. And since he was a God-fearing man, Noah built a houseboat to save his family.* And by his faith Noah told everyone that the world was going to be destroyed, and became one of those heir's* whom God says are perfectly holy because of their faith.

8It was Abraham's faith that made him obey when God called him to leave his home and go to a land which God was going to give him as His child and heir. And he left home without even knowing where he was

going.* ⁹And it was his faith that led Abraham to live in that promised land like a foreigner who was living in a land belonging to others. He lived in tents, and so did Isaac and Jacob, to whom God made the same promise, that He would give them that land.*

¹⁰You see, Abraham was looking forward to the City which God has designed and built, the city which has the real foundations.*

¹¹It was his faith which gave Abraham the power to become a father, even though he was too old to have children and his wife Sarah had never been able to have any children before.* But Abraham believed that the one who had given him the promise could be trusted.* ¹²And so from one man who was sexually dead came a family "so large that they are like the stars in the sky. And like the sand on the seashore, they can't be counted".⁺

¹³All these people died as believers, since they hadn't yet received what God had promised them. But they saw the promises as something they would receive in the future. They also spoke of themselves as visitors and foreigners here on earth.* ¹⁴And people who say such things make it clear that they're looking for a homeland of their own. ¹⁵For if they were thinking about the land they had left, they could have gone back there. ¹⁶But the truth is that they had their heart set on a better land, a heavenly one. And for this reason God isn't ashamed to be called their God. In fact, He has prepared a city for them.*

^{17a}cWhen Abraham was being tested,* it was his faith that made him bring Isaac as an offering to God. And Isaac was the son God had promised to give him many times. ¹⁸And one of those times God said to Abraham, "The family I told you about will come from Isaac".⁺ ^{17b}And so it was that only son whom Abraham brought as an offering to God, ¹⁹because he believed that God was even able to raise Isaac back to life from the dead. And the way Isaac was born was also a picture of someone rising from the dead.

20It was Isaac's faith that made him ask God to bless Jacob and Esau in the future.*

21It was Jacob's faith that made him ask God to bless each of Joseph's sons as he was dying,* and then he worshiped God as he leaned on the top of his staff.

22When Joseph was dying, it was his faith that led him to remind the children of Israel that they would leave Egypt, and give them orders about what they were to do with his dead body.*

23It was the faith of Moses' parents that made them hide Moses for three months after he was born, because they saw that he was a very special child,⁺ and they weren't afraid of the king's orders.

24It was Moses' faith that made him refuse to be called the son of the Pharaoh's daughter when he grew up. **25**Instead, he chose to suffer with God's people, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. **26**He thought being insulted and made fun of as a believer in the Messiah* would make him far richer than all the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to the time when everyone will get what he has coming. **27**And so it was Moses' faith that made him leave Egypt, and not the fact that he was afraid of the king's anger, for Moses had the strength of a man who has seen the invisible God. **28**It was also his faith that made Moses keep the Passover and paint the blood on the doors, so that the one who was going to destroy the oldest child in each house wouldn't touch a single one of them.*

29It was their faith that made it possible for the people of Israel to cross the Red Sea just as though they were walking on dry land. And when the Egyptians tried it, the sea swallowed them up.* **30**And it was the faith of the people of Israel that made the walls of Jericho fall down after they had marched around the city for seven days.*

31It was the prostitute Rahab's faith that kept her from being killed along with the unbelievers, since

she had taken the spies into her house and treated them as friends.*

32But why should I go any farther? You see, I won't have enough time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets. **33**It was their faith that made it possible for these men to conquer kingdoms, and do what was right, and get what God had promised them. And it was their faith that shut the mouths of lions,* **34**and overcame the heat of the fire,* and protected them from death in battle. Their weakness was turned into power, and they became strong in battle and forced the armies of foreign nations to turn and run.

35Women got their loved ones back alive even after they had died.* And others were tortured because they refused to be set free if it meant giving up their faith. And they refused because they believed that God would raise them up again to a better Life. **36**Others were laughed at and whipped, or were even put in chains or thrown in jail.* **37**And others were killed with stones,* or sawed in two, or killed with the sword. They went around dressed in sheepskins and goatskins, having no money or food, and suffering from all kinds of bad treatment. **38**The world wasn't good enough for people like this, and so they wandered around in the deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.

39Yes, all these people have become famous because of their faith, but they haven't yet received what God promised them, **40**because God has planned something better for us. His plan is that we and they will all be made perfect at the same time.

Life's Race

12Talking about ourselves, then, this means that we have this crowd of great men and women floating over us like a cloud, watching us. And therefore we must try to get rid of everything that gets in the way, and the sin that captures us so easily, and run

the race which lies before us with our minds made up that we're not going to give up. ²And as we run, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the one who has given us our faith and also makes it perfect.* For when He thought of the joy that was waiting for Him, He patiently put up with the cross, paying no attention to the shame and disgrace of such a death.* And now He's seated at the right side of God's throne. ³Therefore you must remember how patiently He put up with all the hateful things sinful people said and did to Him, so that you won't get tired and give up.

⁴In your struggle against sin you haven't yet fought to the point where anyone has died. ⁵But have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as His children? -

"My child, you mustn't think of the Lord's discipline as a thing of little value,
and don't be discouraged when He punishes you,
⁶ because the Lord punishes the person He loves
to teach him a lesson,
and He uses the rod on every child who is an heir".*⁺

⁷So you must accept your punishment as something done to teach you a lesson, since God is treating you as His children. After all, is there any child who isn't disciplined by his father? ⁸And so if it's true that you aren't being disciplined, you really aren't God's true children at all, but children born to unmarried women, since discipline is something which all true children receive.

⁹You also know that we all used to have earthly fathers who disciplined us to teach us a lesson, and we respected them for it. Therefore mustn't we be much more willing to put ourselves under the authority of our spiritual Father, so that we can live? ¹⁰When our earthly fathers punished us for a short time, they did what seemed best to them. But when our heavenly Father punishes us, he is doing what is best for us, so that we will be holy like Him. ¹¹But there isn't any kind of punishment which makes us happy when

we're being punished. It always makes us sad. But later on it produces good fruit for those who have been given this training, for it makes them perfectly holy and gives them peace.* ¹²Therefore "you must lift up your tired hands and strengthen your weak and wobbly knees",⁺ ¹³and make straight paths to walk on, so that the lame foot won't be crippled, but healed.

Jesus Gives us a Better Homeland – The New Jerusalem

¹⁴Try to live in peace with everyone and be holy, for the person who isn't holy will never see the Lord.* ¹⁵And at the same time you must be careful that you don't do anything to keep anyone away from God's undeserved love, because you don't want any bitter root to sprout up in your group that will cause trouble and make many people unclean. ¹⁶And you don't want anyone in your group to be sexually unclean, or a godless person like Esau, who sold his rights as the oldest son for a single meal.* ¹⁷For you know that afterwards, when he wanted his father to give him God's blessing, Isaac said it couldn't be done, even though Esau asked him for the blessing with tears in his eyes, because Esau was never sorry for what he had done.*

¹⁸You see, you haven't come to a mountain you can touch, one that is blazing with fire and covered with a cloud and the darkness of a thunderstorm, ¹⁹with the sound of a trumpet and a voice speaking,* which made the people who heard it beg that the voice stop speaking to them.* ²⁰You see, they couldn't stand to listen to the orders the voice was giving them, when it said, "If even an animal touches this mountain, it must be killed with stones".* ²¹Yes, what they saw was so terrible that Moses said, "I'm trembling with fear!"*

²²But you have come to Mt. Zion, which is the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,* with its tens of thousands of angels all gathered together. ²³You have come to the Church in which every member has the honor of being God's oldest child, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to the God

who is the Judge of all human beings, and to the spirits of the people who have been made perfectly holy.

24And you have come to Jesus, the middleman of the new agreement,* and His blood, which was sprinkled on the mercy seat. And that blood promises something much better than Abel's blood does.*

25See to it then that you don't refuse to listen to the one who is speaking to you now. After all, those people at Mt. Sinai didn't escape God's holy anger when they refused to listen to the man who brought them God's message here on earth. And it's surely much more certain that we aren't going to escape His anger if we turn our backs on the one who is bringing God's message to us from heaven. **26**There at Mt. Sinai God's voice shook the earth. But now it has given us His promise which says, "One more time I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens!"⁺

27And the words "one more time" tell us plainly that God is going to destroy the things that are shaken, since they are things that have been created, so that the things which can't be shaken will remain.

28Therefore we must be thankful, since we are receiving a kingdom which can never be destroyed. And our thankful hearts must lead us to serve God in a God-pleasing way, with the proper reverence and fear, **29**for "our God is a devouring fire!"⁺

Orders for the Members of Jesus' Kingdom

13 **1**So you must keep on loving one another as brothers. **2**And don't forget to be kind to strangers who are traveling and need a place to stay and something to eat. It's true that by doing this some people have received angels into their homes without knowing it.* **3**Remember those who are in prison as if you were in prison with them, and remember those who are suffering as if it was your body that's feeling the pain.

4You must think of marriage as something of great value, and husbands and wives must be faithful to

each other. For you know that God will punish those who are sexually unclean, and those who have sex with anyone except their own husband or wife.*

⁵You must also keep your lives free from the love of money, and never feel that you need any more than you have, for God has said, "I will never desert you, and I will never leave you".⁺ ⁶And this is why we are filled with courage and confidence and say,

"The Lord is my Helper.

I will not be afraid.

What can any human being do to me?"⁺

Hold Fast to the True Faith

⁷Remember the men who have been your leaders and have brought you God's message. And as you do, look carefully at what they have accomplished by their lives, and try to have the same kind of faith they had.

⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹And you mustn't let yourselves be led away from the right road* by all kinds of strange teachings, because the important thing is that our hearts be strengthened by God's undeserved love, and not by the things we eat. For those who make foods the important thing in their lives have never received any real benefit from them.

¹⁰The priests who serve in the Temple have no right to eat anything placed on our altar. ¹¹You see, the Head Priest brings the blood of the sacrificed animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies of those animals are burned outside the city. ¹²And this is why Jesus also suffered and died outside the city gates, so that He could make the people clean by His own blood.

¹³Therefore we must go to Him outside the city and share the insults and disgrace He suffered. ¹⁴After all, we don't have any permanent city here on earth. Instead, we're looking for the one which is going to come. ¹⁵And therefore we must make use of Jesus

our Head Priest as we always keep on bringing God our daily sacrifices of praise, which are the songs we sing as we praise Him. ¹⁶And don't forget to do good things and share what you have with others, for God is pleased with this kind of sacrifices.

¹⁷You must obey your leaders and do what they tell you, because they're always watching over your souls, as men who are going to have to give an account of their service to God. You must obey them therefore, so that they can do their work with happy hearts, and not be groaning and complaining, for that would be a great loss for you.

A Final Prayer, Greetings and Blessing

¹⁸Keep on praying for us, for we're sure that we have a good conscience, since we want to live the best possible kind of life at all times. ¹⁹And I'm asking you to pray especially that God will send me back to you soon.

²⁰Our God is the one who gives us peace.* And He has brought our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep,* back to life from the dead by the blood of the eternal agreement. ²¹And I'm praying that He will supply you with every good thing, so that you can do what He wants. For He is the one who works in us everything that pleases Him through Jesus Christ, who must be given the glory and honor forever and ever. And that's the truth.

²²I'm urging you, my brothers and sisters, to listen carefully to my message of encouragement, for this letter I have written is not a long one.

²³You know that our brother Timothy has been let out of prison,* and if he gets here soon enough, he'll be with me when I see you.

²⁴Give my greetings to all your leaders and all of God's people.* The people from Italy send you their greetings. ²⁵I pray that you will all continue to enjoy God's undeserved love.

A LETTER FROM JAMES

(Written about 45-50 A.D.)

1 This letter is from James,* a slave of God and our Lord Jesus, the Messiah.*

And I'm writing to the twelve tribes of Israel who are scattered all over the world.

Greetings!

Hold On in Your Troubles, and Ask God's Help!

2My brothers and sisters, when your lives are filled with all kinds of trials and troubles, you must think of this as a really joyful thing, **3**because you know that the testing of your faith produces the ability to hold on patiently. **4**And you must let this ability to hold on patiently do its full work, so that you will be perfect and complete Christians, not lacking a single thing.*

5And if any of you lacks wisdom, you must ask God for it, and He will give it to you, for He gives generously to everyone, and He never scolds us for asking. **6**But when you ask, you must have faith and have no doubt at all. For the person who is in doubt is like one of the ocean waves which are tossed around and blown here and there by the wind. **8**A person like that can't ever make up his mind about anything, and you can't depend on him in anything he does. **7**And so that person mustn't think he's going to get anything from the Lord.

Some Thoughts about Being Rich and Poor

9The poor brother must boast about his high position.* **10**And the rich brother must boast about his low position, because he will disappear "like a wild flower." **11**For the sun rises with its burning heat, "and the

*Helpful notes for James begin on page 855

plants in the fields are dried up. Their flowers fall off",⁺ and their beauty is destroyed. That's exactly what will happen to the rich man. He will also disappear right in the middle of his business activities!

The Truth about Trials and Temptations

12The person who patiently holds on to his faith when he's being tempted is a truly happy person, because when he has passed the test, he will receive his crown of Life,* which God has promised to those who love Him.

13And when a person is being tempted, he must never say, "It's God who is tempting me." After all, God can't be tempted by anything that is evil, and He Himself never tempts anyone. **14**But every person is tempted when he's pulled away and trapped by his own sinful desires. **15**Then his sinful desire becomes active and gives birth to sin; and when sin is full-grown, it kills us.

We are God's Beloved Children

16My dear brothers and sisters, don't let anyone fool you and lead you astray. **17**Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven, coming down from the Creator of the heavenly lights. And it's impossible for Him to change in any way, or turn so as to throw a shadow on anything. **18**He has brought us into this world as His children by His truthful Word, because He wanted us to be the very best of all His creatures.*

The Secret of a Holier Life is to Use God's Word

19Here's something you must know, my dear brothers and sisters. Every person must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow about getting angry, **20**for when a person is angry, he doesn't do the right things God wants. **21**Therefore you must get rid of all filthiness, and the evil which fills our hearts and lives to

⁺Verses quoted in James are on page 879

overflowing. And you must humbly and obediently receive God's Word which He has planted in your hearts, because that Word has the power to save you.

22But you must do more than just listen to God's Word, because if that's all you do, you'll just be fooling yourselves. You must be people who do what God tells you. **23**Because the person who listens to the Word and doesn't do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror. **24**He takes a good look at himself and then goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **25**But a believer must look carefully into God's perfect Word* that sets men free,* and keep on looking. Then he will become a person who does what God tells him to do, and not a forgetful listener. And that person will be truly happy in whatever he does.

26The person who thinks he's religious, and doesn't keep his tongue under control, is just fooling himself, and his religion isn't worth a thing. **27**But what God our Father thinks is pure and spotless religion is looking after orphans and widows in their troubles, and keeping oneself clean from all the filth in the world.

Don't Treat Some People Better than Others

2 My brothers and sisters, as believers in the Lord Jesus our glorious Messiah,* you mustn't be treating some people better or worse than others. **2**For example, suppose a man comes into your meeting house* with gold rings on his fingers and dressed in beautiful clothes, and then a poor man dressed in dirty clothes also comes in. **3**And suppose you pay special attention to the man wearing the beautiful clothes, and say to him, "Here you are, sir. Sit right here in this special chair." And then you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit here on the floor by my feet." **4**If this is what you're doing, aren't you treating one man better than the other? And haven't you become judges who are making bad decisions?

5Listen to me, my dear brothers and sisters. Isn't

it true that God has chosen the poor people in this world to be rich in faith, and to receive the Kingdom He has set aside to give to those who love Him? ⁶But you're treating the poor man like a nobody. Isn't it the rich people who push you around unfairly and drag you into the courtrooms? ⁷And aren't they the ones who are saying nasty and insulting things about the good name God has given you?

⁸You're doing the right thing if you keep your King's Law, as it's written in the Bible - "You must love your neighbor as much as you love yourself".⁺ ⁹But if it's true that you're treating some people better than others, you're doing a sinful thing, and the Law condemns you as lawbreakers.

¹⁰You see, if a person keeps the whole Law, but fails to keep just one commandment, that person is guilty of breaking all the commandments. ¹¹Because the One who said, "You must not have sex with anyone except your own husband or wife!"⁺ also said, "You must not kill!"⁺ And so if you kill someone, you're a lawbreaker, even if you have never committed any sexual sins.

¹²Therefore you must speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the Word that sets people free.* ¹³Because God will show no mercy when He judges the person who has shown no mercy. So mercy will win out at the judgment.

True Faith and Dead Faith

¹⁴My brothers and sisters, suppose a person says he has faith, but never does anything good. What good is his faith? That faith can't save him, can it? ¹⁵Suppose some brother or sister has no clothes and no food to eat today. ¹⁶And suppose some one of you says, "Everything will be all right. You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about.* Keep warm and get enough to eat." But you don't give them the things their bodies need. What good does your advice do? ¹⁷That's also the way it is with faith. If it never does anything good, faith all by itself is dead.

18But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have the good things I'm doing. You show me your faith without doing something good, and I'll show you my faith by the good things I'm doing."

19You believe that there's only one God? Very good. Even the demons believe that, and they tremble with fear. **20**But now, you foolish man, do you want me to show you that a faith which never does anything good is useless? **21**Didn't God accept our father Abraham as perfectly holy* because of what he did, when he brought his son Isaac and laid him on the altar as a sacrifice?* **22**You can see that his faith was working when you see the things he did. And you can see that it was what Abraham did that made his faith complete and perfect. **23**And so what the Bible said came true, that "Abraham believed God, and God gave him credit for being perfectly holy",⁺ and he was called "God's friend".* **24**And so you see that God accepts a person as perfectly holy because of what he does, and not because of a faith that has no fruit.

25And the same thing happened to Rahab the prostitute. Didn't God accept her as perfectly holy because of what she did, when she took the spies into her house and then helped them get out of town by a different road?

26And so we learn that a faith which does nothing good is dead, just as a body without a spirit is dead.*

Controlling the Tongue

3 My brothers, not many of you should try to become teachers, because you know that we teachers will be given greater punishment than the others, ²because we all make a lot of mistakes.

If a person never says anything wrong, he is the perfect human being, since he is also able to keep his whole body under control.

3If we put little bars of metal in our horses' mouths to make them obey us, we can also drive the whole animal wherever we want. **4**And look at the ships.

Even though they are so big and are driven by such strong winds, the pilot steers them with a tiny little rudder, and makes them go wherever he wants. ⁵And it's the same thing with the tongue. It's a very small part of our body, but it can boast about doing big things.

See what a tiny little flame it takes to set a huge forest on fire. ⁶And the tongue is like a fire. It's a little world filled with wickedness that has its place among the parts of our body. But it makes our whole body unclean, and sets our whole life on fire. And it's hell itself which sets our tongue on fire.

⁷People can tame, and have tamed, every kind of wild animal, and every kind of creature that flies in the air, or crawls on the ground, or lives in the water. ⁸But no one is able to tame his tongue. It's a wicked thing that never stops talking, full of deadly poison.

⁹We use our tongue to sing praises to our Lord and Father, and we use it also to ask God to curse other human beings who have been created in God's image. ¹⁰Praises and curses coming out of the same mouth! Things like this mustn't happen, my brothers and sisters.

¹¹A spring doesn't pour sweet water and bitter water out of the same opening, does it? ¹²Of course not, my brothers and sisters. And a fig tree can't grow olives, and a grape vine can't grow figs, can they? And neither can a salt spring give fresh water.

True Wisdom

¹³Who in your group is wise and well educated? The things his wisdom leads him to do in his kind and gentle way as a part of his good life will show you who he is. ¹⁴But if it's true that your hearts are full of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, you must stop bragging and saying things which aren't true. ¹⁵This can't be the wisdom that comes down from heaven! This is wisdom that belongs to the earth, like that of the animals and demons. ¹⁶You see, where there's jealousy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and everything that is evil.

17But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and clean. And then it's also peace loving, easy to get along with, and obedient to God, full of mercy and good deeds, not quarrelsome, and it never pretends to be something it isn't. **18**And the peace-makers in their peaceful way are sowing the seed that will produce a harvest of good words and deeds.

Stay away from the World and Its Pleasures

4 Where do the fights and quarrels in your group come from? Isn't it from your desires for pleasure that are fighting to have their way in the members of your body? **2**You have sinful desires for things and you don't get them. You kill and try to get them, but you still can't get them. And so you go on quarreling and fighting. You don't have the things you want because you don't ask God for them. **3**Or you ask and don't get what you ask for because you're asking in the wrong way, so that you can use it all for your own pleasures.

4You people are like wives who have been unfaithful. Don't you know that being friendly with the world* is the same thing as hating God? Therefore any person who wants to be the world's friend is making himself God's enemy. **5**Or do you think God is just kidding us when He says, "His Spirit who lives within us loves us in a jealous way."⁺ **6**But God gives us His undeserved love, which is a much greater gift. And therefore He says,

"Your God is against those who think
they're better than others,
but He gives His love which no one deserves to
those who put themselves in the lowest place".⁺

7Therefore you must do everything God tells you. And you must also stand up against the devil, and he'll run away from you. **8**Get close to God, and He will get close to you. You sinners must wash your hands! And you doubters must clean up your hearts! **9**Be sorry and cry and sob! Your laughter must be turned into sorrow, and your joy into the deepest grief. **10**You must think of yourself as the one who belongs in the

lowest place before the Lord, and He will raise you to a high place.⁺

Don't Condemn Other People

11My brothers and sisters, you must stop saying bad things about each other. The person who says bad things about his brother or sister, or condemns his brother or sister is saying bad things about the Law and condemning the Law. And if you're condemning the Law, you aren't one who is under the Law, but a judge. **12**But there's only one Lawgiver and Judge who has the power to save and destroy. So who are you, to be condemning your neighbor?

And Don't be Boasting

13And now I have something to say to you people who are saying, "Today or tomorrow we'll go to this or that city, and stay there for a year, and buy and sell things and make some money." **14**People like you don't know anything about what your life will be like tomorrow. You see, you're like the morning fog, which appears for a little while, and then suddenly disappears. **15**Instead, you should say, "If this is what the Lord wants, we shall live long enough to do this or that."

16But what you're doing is bragging, with all your big talk. And all such bragging is sinful. **17**So I'm telling you that when a person knows the right thing to do and doesn't do it, he's sinning.

A Word of Warning to the Rich

5 And now I have something to say to you rich people. You'd better start crying and sobbing and wailing over the painful things that are going to come to you. **2**Your riches have rotted away, and the moths have eaten your clothes. **3**Your gold and silver are covered with rust, and the rust^{*} will be evidence that will condemn you, and eat up your sinful bodies^{*} like fire. Yes, you have stored up riches in these last days!^{*} **4**You haven't paid the workmen who cut the grain

in your fields what they have earned. And now listen! You can hear their unpaid wages crying out against you. Yes, the cries of those men who cut your grain have reached the ears of the Lord, the Commander in Chief of the armies of heaven. ⁵You have lived on this earth in luxury and pleasure, and you have made yourselves fat for the day when you will be killed. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the innocent person who doesn't put up a fight.

Be Patient and Use No Oaths

⁷And so my brothers and sisters, you must wait patiently until the Lord comes back again. Notice how the farmer waits for the earth to bring forth its crop, which is worth so much money. He waits patiently until it gets "the early and the late rains".⁺ ⁸You also must be patient and spiritually strong, because the time of the Lord's return is very near. ⁹And you must stop complaining about what your brothers and sisters are doing, so that God won't punish you. Remember that the Judge is standing right outside the door.

¹⁰My brothers and sisters, you have some fine examples of people who really suffered and took their sufferings patiently in the prophets who spoke as the Lord's messengers. ¹¹And remember that we're saying that those people who patiently hold on to their faith through all their troubles are the truly happy people. You have heard about how patiently Job held on to his faith through all his troubles, and you know what the Lord did for him in the end, because "the Lord's heart is full of mercy and pity".⁺

¹²And above all, my brothers and sisters, you must stop using oaths when you make a promise. Stop swearing "by heaven" or "by the earth", or using any other kind of oath. Instead, when you want to say "yes", say "Yes", and when you want to say "no", say "No",* so that you won't fall under God's judgment.

The Power of Prayer

13Is anyone in your group having trouble? He must pray. Is anyone happy? He must sing God's praises.

14Is anyone in your group sick? He must send for the pastor or his assistants, and they must pour some oil on him as the Lord's representatives, and pray for him. **15**And their prayer, coming from hearts filled with faith, will make the sick man well, and the Lord will raise him from his bed; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. **16**Therefore you must confess your sins to each other, and pray for one another, so that you can be healed. For the prayer of a person who is perfectly holy* in God's sight is a very powerful thing when it's put to work.

17Elijah was a human being just like us. And when he prayed hard that it wouldn't rain, no rain fell on that land for three and a half years. **18**And when he prayed again, the sky sent down its rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Helping Our Brothers Who Wander from the Truth

19My brothers, if someone in your group wanders away from the truth, and someone else brings him back again, **20**the one who gets the sinner off his wrong road and turns him around again must know that he will be saving his friend from death and covering up a great many sins.*

PETER'S FIRST LETTER

(Written probably in 65 or 66 A.D.)*

This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.*

1 And I'm writing to God's chosen people who are living in this world as citizens of a foreign country, scattered about in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bythynia.* **2**You were chosen by God our Father, who knew all about you from eternity. And working through His Spirit, who makes us holy, He chose you to be holy people, so that you will obey Jesus Christ and be made clean by His blood.

I pray that God will continue to give you an overflowing supply of His undeserved love and His peace.*

Our Living Hope

3We must praise our God, who is also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, because by His great mercy He caused us to be born again as His children, and gave us a living hope by raising Jesus Christ back to life again from the dead. **4**And now we are looking forward to the time when we shall inherit all the good things our Father has set aside to give us.* And you know that this inheritance will never be destroyed or soiled by sin, or lose its freshness and value, since God is the One who is keeping it all for you in heaven. **5**And at the same time He is guarding you and keeping you safe by His power through your faith, so that you will receive this salvation that is all ready to be shown and given to you on the Last Day.*

Our Faith. Worth More than Gold

6And all this must fill you with joy, even though right now it may be necessary that your lives be filled with sadness for a little while, because of all the different kinds of things that are happening to you to test your faith. **7**Gold is tested to see if it's genuine

*Helpful notes for 1 Peter begin on page 856

by putting it in the fire. But even if it's found to be genuine, gold will lose its value. Your faith, however, is much more valuable than gold. And it must also be tested by putting it in the fire, so that it will turn out to be the true faith that will bring you praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ comes back again so that everyone will see Him. ⁸You love Jesus even though you have never seen Him. And even though you don't see Him right now, you believe in Him, and your hearts are filled with a wonderful kind of joy which words can't describe, ⁹because you are now in the process of being saved from sin and death, which is the end result of your faith.

¹⁰The prophets who spoke and wrote about God's undeserved love for you were also looking and searching for this salvation. ¹¹For God's Spirit was in their hearts, and He had told them in advance how their Messiah* would suffer, and about the wonderful things that would happen to Him after that. And so those prophets were searching to learn who this Messiah would be, and exactly when He would appear.

¹²But God made it clear to them that they weren't speaking and writing about these things for themselves, but for you people. And now you have heard all these things from the people who brought you the Good News by the power of the Holy Spirit who was sent from heaven. And even the angels are anxious to find out more about these things.

As God's Children You Must be Holy

¹³Therefore you must keep your minds alert and clear, and build all your hopes on the gift you will receive when Jesus Christ comes back again so that everyone will see Him. ¹⁴As obedient children of God, your lives mustn't be controlled by your sinful desires, as they were when you didn't know the difference between right and wrong. ¹⁵Now you must try to become holy in everything you do, just as the one who called you is holy, ¹⁶because the Bible says,

"You must be holy, because I am holy."⁺

17God has no favorites. He treats everyone alike, and judges every person according to what that person has done. And since you call this God your Father, you must spend your time here like people living in a foreign country, with a proper fear and respect for your Father. **18**Because you know what kind of a price was paid to set you free from the worthless way of living your forefathers handed down to you. That price wasn't paid with things that lose their value, like silver and gold. **19**No indeed, it was the precious blood of Christ, who was like a perfect lamb.*

20He was chosen to be your Sacrifice before the world was created, but it was just a few years ago that God made it clear who He was, so that you would know Him. **21**And so because of Jesus you people now believe in God, who raised Jesus from the dead and gave Him glory and honor. And so your faith and hope are in God.

22Now you have a genuine love for your fellow believers because your obedience to the truth has made your hearts clean. And therefore you must love one another intensely with all your hearts, **23**because you have been born again*by the living and eternal Word of God. And therefore you are not children of a human father who must die, but of a Father who can never die. **24**For

"all human beings are like the grass and the plants,
and all their beauty is like the flower on a plant.

The grass and the plants dry up,
and the flowers fall off;

25 but the Lord's Word lives on forever."⁺

And this is the Word which has come to you as the Good News.

⁺Verses quoted in 1 Peter are on page 879

2 Therefore **3**since "you have tasted the Lord's kindness",⁺ **1**you must try to get rid of everything that is evil and dishonest, and not pretend to be something you aren't, or be jealous and say bad things about others. **2**You must be like little newborn babies, thirsty for the pure milk which feeds the soul, so that by drinking it you can grow up and be saved.

You are Living Stones and a Holy Nation

4The Lord Jesus is the Living Stone, and even though people have thrown Him aside as of no value, in God's eyes He's a very special person of great value. **5**And since you are living stones, as you come to Him you are built up into a spiritual Temple, to be a holy group of priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices which God is happy to receive, because they are brought to Him through Jesus Christ. **6**This is what the Bible says -

"Look! I'm laying a stone in Zion,
a very special cornerstone of great value;
and the person who believes in Him
will never be disappointed".⁺

7This means that He's of great value to you people who believe in Him, but for those who don't believe in Him,

"the stone which the builders decided was no good
is the very one which has become
the cornerstone";⁺⁺

8 and "the stone which will make people stumble,
and the rock which will make them fall".⁺

These people stumble because they don't believe God's Word, and they will go to the place God has set aside for them.

9But you are "God's chosen people",⁺ "a group of priests who are serving your King, a holy nation",⁺ "which belongs to God, so that you can tell other people all the wonderful things about God",⁺ who has called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light.

10 "There was a time when you were no people at all,
but now you are God's people.

You who never knew God's mercy
have now received His mercy".⁺

Live as Citizens of God's Kingdom

11 Dear friends, you're living here as foreigners and citizens of another country. And therefore I'm begging you to stay away from the desires which come from your sinful mind and body,* for such desires are always fighting against your new man or woman.* **12** Your daily lives and conduct among the unbelievers* around you must be so good that while they're saying nasty things about you, as though you were criminals, they will also be seeing your good deeds and give glory and honor to God on the Day of Judgment.*

13 For the Lord's sake you must obey every human authority, whether it's the king, who has authority over everything, **14** or the governors whom the king sends to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right. **15** God wants you to put a stop to all the ignorant things foolish people are saying by doing good things. **16** And He wants you to live as free people. But you mustn't use your freedom to cover up some evil. Instead, as free people you must live as God's slaves. **17** Give everyone the honor and respect they deserve, loving your fellow believers, fearing God, and honoring the king.

18 You household slaves must continue to obey your masters with all fear and respect; and not only those masters who are kind and easy to get along with, but also those who are hard and unfair. **19** You see, it's a truly fine thing if a person patiently endures some sufferings and griefs he doesn't deserve, because he wants to please God. **20** After all, what special praise do you deserve if you take your punishment without complaining when you're doing something wrong? But it's a fine thing in God's eyes if you suffer without complaining when you're doing something good. **21** You see, this is what God called you to do, because Christ also suffered for you. And by doing this, He left you

an example, so that you would follow in His footsteps.

22 Jesus is a man who "never did anything sinful, and He never said anything that was false or dishonest".⁺

23 When others were saying insulting things to Him, He never answered back with insults. When He was suffering, He never threatened anyone, but handed Himself over to the one who always judges fairly.

24 He's the one who "carried our sins"⁺ on His own body to the cross, so that we could get rid of our sins and live the kind of holy lives God wants. And "you have been healed by His wounds".⁺ **25** You see, you were "like sheep who were lost;"⁺ but now you have been brought back to your Shepherd who is always watching over your souls.

3 You wives must also live by the same rules. You must obey your husbands, so that even though there are some husbands who don't believe God's Word, they will be won for His Kingdom by the way their wives live, without a word being spoken. **2** For they will see how pure and clean your lives are, because of your fear of God. **3** Your beauty mustn't come from outward things, like a fancy hair style, or wearing gold jewelry, or the clothes you wear. **4** Instead, the real "you", the inner woman, must have the eternal and unfading beauty of a quiet spirit which is kind and gentle to others. This is of great value in God's sight.

5 You see, this is the way it was in the past. The holy women who trusted in God used to make themselves beautiful by always obeying their husbands. **6** Sarah, for example, obeyed Abraham and called him "master". And you have become her daughters if you keep on doing good things and aren't afraid of anything.

7 And the same rules apply to you husbands. You must live with your wives in a wise and understanding way, giving your wife honor and respect as the weaker sex, since they will also inherit the gift of Life that God has set aside to give to you. And you must do

this so that God will continue to hear your prayers.

8And finally, you must all have the same thoughts and feelings. You must love your brothers and sisters and be tender-hearted, thinking of yourselves as of less importance than others. **9**You mustn't pay back the person who does something bad to you by doing something bad to him; and you mustn't pay back an insult with another insult. Instead, you must pay them back by asking God to bless them,* because this is what God called you to do, so that you will receive the blessing He has set aside to give to His children.

10And so

"the person who wants to enjoy life

and see good times

must keep his tongue from saying anything bad,

and his lips from speaking anything that isn't true.

11 He must turn away from evil and do good.

He must look for peace, and really try to find it,

12 because the Lord is always watching over those

who are perfectly holy in His sight,*

and He listens to their prayers.

But the Lord is against those who do evil things".[†]

You may have to Suffer

13Who will do you any harm if you're always eager to do what is good? **14**But even if you should suffer for doing what God says is right, you're truly happy people. "So don't let your enemies scare you or get you all upset. **15**You must also give your hearts completely to Christ as your Lord",[†] always being ready to give an answer to every person who asks you about the hope you have in your heart. **16**But you must do this in a kind, gentle and respectful way. And you mustn't say anything that will give you a bad conscience, so that when people insult you, they will be ashamed of themselves for saying such bad things about your good life and conduct as followers of Christ.

17You see, if it's true that God wants you to suffer, it's better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong.

18After all, Christ also suffered once for all sins, a man who never did anything wrong suffering for people who never did anything right. And He did this so that He could bring you to God. When He was killed, He had a human body, but when He was brought back to Life, He had a spiritual body.* **19**And in this spiritual body He also went and spread the news of His victory to the spirits who were in prison.* **20**This included those who had refused to believe God's announcement back in the days when Noah was building his houseboat, and God was waiting patiently for them to believe what He told them. But it was only a few people, eight of them to be exact, who went into that boat and were saved by the water.

21That water also gives us a picture of baptism which is now saving you. For being baptized isn't just getting rid of some dirt from our sinful body.* No indeed! It's the promise made to God from a person who believes that his sins are forgiven, because Jesus Christ rose back to life from the grave,* **22**and now He is sitting at God's right hand. And when He went to heaven, God put all the angels, authorities and powers under His control.*

4 Since Christ suffered physical pain, you must think about sufferings in the same way He did, that the person who suffers physical pain is all through with sin. **2**And then you won't be driven any longer by sinful human desires, but by God's will, as you live out the rest of your life here on earth.

3After all, in the past years you have spent enough time doing the things the unbelievers* like to do. Then your lives were filled with filthy and disgusting and immoral thoughts and sinful desires, and you spent your time getting drunk and parading around town in a drunken condition, as you went from one party to the next, and worshiped forbidden idols. **4**And now your old friends are surprised that you aren't joining them any more in their uncontrolled, wild and reckless living, and they're saying nasty things about you. **5**But

they will have to give an answer for all this to the One who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6You see, this is why the Good News was also brought to the people who have died, to tell them that while their sinful mind and body* has been condemned to eternal death like all human beings, their spirit can go on living the way God wants.

Since the End is Near, We Must Live Holy Lives

7We are in the last times.* And therefore you must keep your minds alert and clear, and stay sober, so that you can keep on praying. **8**And most important of all, you must keep your Christian love* reaching out eagerly, because Christian love covers up a great many sins.* **9**And if some of the brothers are travelling and need a place to stay and something to eat, take them into your homes without complaining, even if they're strangers.

10And since each one of you has received some special gift from God, you must use that gift for the good of all the others in your group, like good managers of the many different gifts that God in His love has given us.* **11**When any of you speak, it should sound just as though God is speaking. And if one of you is helping others, he must use the strength God gives him, so that everything you say and do will bring God glory and honor, through Jesus Christ, who also has the glory, honor and power forever and ever.* Yes, that's the way it must be!

Suffering is a Part of Our Christian Life

12My dear friends, right now you are being put through the fire.* But you mustn't be surprised at this, as if some strange thing is happening to you. **13**Instead, you must be happy that you're sharing Christ's sufferings,* so that you can be happy and full of joy also when He comes back again so that everyone will see Him in His shining heavenly beauty. **14**Since people are saying nasty things about you because you're Christ's followers, you're truly happy people, because God

has poured out His wonderful Spirit upon you.

15Of course, none of you must be suffering as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or a spy. **16**But since you're suffering as Christians, you mustn't be ashamed of that, but you must use this name to bring glory and honor to God.

17You see, the time has come for the Judgment to begin, and it will begin with God's own family.* But if it starts with us, what will happen at the end to those who refuse to believe God's Good News?

18And

"if it's barely possible for the person God
accepts as perfectly holy to be saved,
what will happen to the sinner who has
no respect for God?"*

19And so those who are suffering because this is what God wants, must keep on doing good things and put themselves in the hands of a Creator who can always be trusted.

To The Pastors

5 And now I want to ask the pastors in your churches to do something. I'm also a pastor like you,* and I can tell you about Christ's sufferings, because I saw them with my own eyes. And I'm also going to be given a share of the glory and honor which God is going to show us. I'm urging you men **2**to take care of God's flock in your area. And you must watch over your sheep willingly and eagerly, and not because you're forced to do this, or because of any greedy desire to make money. **3**You mustn't act like slavemasters over those whom the Lord has given you, but be examples to your flock. **4**And then when the Head Shepherd comes back again, you will be given a wonderful heavenly crown that will never wither and die.*

To the Other Christians

5In the same way you younger men must obey the older ones who are pastors. And you must each put on the slave's apron, so that you think of yourself as

of less importance than the others, and serve each other, because

"God is against those who think they're better than others,
but He gives His love which no one deserves to those who put themselves in the lowest place".⁺

6Therefore you must let God's mighty hand bring you down to the lowest place, so that He will lift you up to a high place at the proper time.* **7**And you must throw your whole load of worries on Him, because He really cares about you.

8You must also keep your minds alert and clear, and stay awake, because your enemy, the devil, is walking around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to swallow up. **9**You must fight against him with the strength your faith gives you. And remember that your fellow believers in the world are going through the same kind of troubles.

10But our all-loving God has called you through Christ to share His eternal glory and honor. And after you have suffered for a little while, He will make you perfect, firm, strong and immovable. **11**And His power will never fail. And that's the truth.

Closing Greetings

12 I have written you this short letter to encourage you and assure you that I know that this undeserved love of God I'm writing about is genuine; and you must stand on this foundation. And Silas,* whom I believe is a very faithful brother, helped me write the letter.

13The church here in Babylon,* who have also been chosen by God, send you their greetings, and so does my son Mark.

14Greet one another with a loving kiss. And I'm praying that God will keep on giving all of you who are in Christ* His peace, so that you will have nothing to worry about or be afraid of.

PETER'S SECOND LETTER

(Written about 67 A.D.)*

1 This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ.

And I'm writing to people who have been given a faith that is just as valuable as ours, so that they put their trust in all the right and perfect things that Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, did. **2**And now I pray that God will keep on giving you more and more of His undeserved love and His peace* through the full knowledge about our God and Jesus our Lord.

We Must Grow in Faith and in Christian Virtues

3God's almighty power has already given us everything we need for eternal Life, and also for a godly life on earth, through the full knowledge* about that One who called us by His own heavenly glory, honor and power.

4In this way God has given us the very great and valuable gifts He promised. And after you have escaped from the corruption that is in this world because of people's sinful desires, those gifts will make it possible for you to share God's heavenly nature.

5And as you think about all this, you must do your very best to add a good character to your faith. And then to your good character you must add knowledge.

6And to your knowledge you must add the ability to control your physical desires. And to your ability to control your physical desires you must add the ability to patiently hold on to your faith in times of trouble. And to your ability to patiently hold on to your faith you must add godliness. **7**And to godliness you must add love for your brothers and sisters. And to your love for your brothers and sisters you must add Christian love.*

*Helpful notes for 2 Peter begin on page 858

8You see, if you have these qualities, and if they are constantly growing, they will make you active and fruitful as you grow into the full knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ. **9**But the person who doesn't have these qualities is blind and can't see things clearly at all, because he has forgotten that his past sins have been washed away.

10And so my brothers and sisters, you must try even harder to make sure that you won't lose the blessings God gave you when He chose you and called you. You see, if you keep on doing all these things, you will never stumble and fall. **11**And finally, then, God will give you a warm welcome into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12And for this reason I'm going to keep on reminding you of these things, even though you already know them and are standing firmly on the truth you now have. **13**But as long as I'm still alive I think I'm doing the right thing when I keep on waking you up by reminding you of these things. **14**For as our Lord Jesus Christ has plainly told me,* I know I'm going to get rid of my present body soon. **15**And so I'm anxious to give you something that will help you to remember these things at any time after I'm gone.

We Were With Jesus

16You see, when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and His life on earth, we didn't use cleverly made up stories and fairy tales. No indeed. We saw what a great and powerful Man He was with our own eyes. **18b**For we were with Him there on that holy mountain, **17**when God His Father gave Him honor and glory. That was the time when that frightening voice spoke to Jesus from that bright and glorious cloud* and said, "This is My Son, My own dear Son, who has made Me very, very happy!"⁺ **18a**And we heard that voice coming from heaven!

⁺Verses quoted in 2 Peter are on page 879

The Prophets Wrote by Inspiration

19We also have the message of the prophets, which is even more reliable and certain. It's like a lamp* which is shining in a dark place, and you'll be doing the wise thing to pay attention to it until the light of the new Day breaks through the darkness, and the Morning Star* rises in your hearts.

20But most important of all, you must remember that not one prophecy in the Bible was written as that prophet's own explanation of things. **21**Because nothing written by the prophets ever came to us because one of them wanted to say something. No indeed. Those men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God.

A Warning against False Teachers

2 But there were also false prophets in the nation of Israel, just as there will also be false teachers in your midst. They're the kind of people who will underhandedly bring in their own teachings which can destroy you, because they are not what the Bible teaches. And since they will be saying that they don't want anything to do with the Master who bought them, they will be quickly destroying themselves. **2**But a lot of people will follow them in their filthy and immoral way of life. And because of them people will say a lot of nasty and untrue things about the true "Road".* **3**In their greed to make money, these false teachers will try to take advantage of you by teaching you things they have made up themselves. But their judgment has been hanging over their heads for a long time, and their destruction is sure to come.

4After all, God didn't fail to punish the angels when they sinned. No indeed. He sent them to hell* and has kept them chained up there in the darkness, waiting for Judgment Day. **5**And God didn't fail to punish the people who lived in the first world either. No indeed. He sent a flood on that world of godless people. But God kept Noah and seven others of his family

safe, because Noah was a man who told those people that they should do what God says is right.

6And God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into a heap of ashes, and condemned the people in them to be destroyed, making them a picture of what's going to happen to all the ungodly people in the world.

7But Lot, who was perfectly holy in God's sight,* couldn't stand to watch the filthy and immoral things those lawless people were doing, and so God rescued him.

8You see, for a godly, perfect man to live in the midst of such people day after day, the sight and sounds of the lawless things they're doing is the worst kind of torture for his soul, which always wants to do the right thing.

9And so we can see that the Lord knows how to rescue those who love God out of their trials and troubles. And He also knows how to keep on punishing those who do wrong as He holds them for Judgment Day. **10**And this is especially true of those who have no respect for God's authority, and those whose lives are controlled by the filthy, sinful desires of their sinful bodies and minds.*

Such false teachers are bold men who won't listen to anyone but themselves. And they aren't afraid to say nasty and insulting things about great men,* **11**while the angels, who are much stronger and more powerful, will never make any insulting judgments about such men in the Lord's presence.

12But these false teachers are like wild animals that have no intelligence, but live by their bodies' sinful desires, and are born to be caught and killed. They say false and insulting things about people of whom they know nothing at all. And when those wild animals are destroyed at the end of the world, these false teachers will also be destroyed, **13**and their suffering will be their wages for their wickedness.

Their idea of pleasure is to have a big drunken party in the daytime. They're diseased spots and stains as they join you at your dinners, and they get their fun

from the things they do to fool and trick you. ¹⁴Their eyes are always looking for a woman who will satisfy their sinful desires, and this kind of thing never stops. They lay their traps for people who are weak. They have trained themselves to be greedy, and they're under God's curse. ¹⁵They have left the right Road* and have gotten lost. And now they're walking on the road that Balaam, the son of Bosor, traveled. He was a man who loved the money he was paid for the wicked things he did. ¹⁶But that prophet was led to see his sin when a donkey, which can't make any sound at all, spoke to him with a human voice and put a stop to the crazy things he was doing.*

¹⁷These false teachers are like wells which have no water, or clouds of mist being driven along by a windstorm; and God is keeping a place for them in the deepest darkness. ¹⁸For by talking about a lot of high-sounding nonsense, they use the filthy, immoral, sinful desires of our sinful mind and body to set their traps for people who are just beginning to escape from those who are living in error. ¹⁹They promise their victims freedom, while they themselves are slaves of things that bring destruction, for a person is a slave to whomever or whatever has become his master.

²⁰After all, when people have escaped from all the filthy things of the world by the full knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and then later on get all tangled up with and overpowered by these same filthy things, in the end those people are much worse off than they were at first. ²¹You see, it would have been better for them if they had never come to know about the Road* that leads to perfect holiness,* than to know about it and then turn back and no longer follow God's holy commandment that was passed along to them. ²²What that true proverb says has happened to such people -

"a dog turns back to what he has vomited up".⁺
And a pig which has been washed goes back to roll around in the mud.

Keep Your Eyes on the Lord's Coming

3 My dear friends, I'm now writing you this second letter. And in both of them I'm trying to keep your pure new minds wide awake by telling you **2**to remember the things the holy prophets said a long time ago, and the command our Lord and Savior gave you through your apostles.

3First of all, you must keep in mind that in the last days* there will be many people whose lives will be controlled by their own sinful desires, and they will make fun of you with their insulting talk. **4**They will be saying, "What about this promise that Jesus will come back again? Where is he? After all, ever since our forefathers fell asleep, everything has been going along just the same as it always has since the world was created."

5You see, these people purposely forget that a long time ago God's Word created the heavens, and brought the earth up out of the water, and used the water to put it together into its present shape. **6**And they also forget that God also used His Word and the water to flood that first world and destroy it.

7And that same Word of God is saving up our present heavens and earth to be burned up, since God is keeping them as they are until the Day of Judgment, when all the ungodly people will be destroyed.*

8But you mustn't forget this one thing, my dear friends, that with the Lord one day is the same as a thousand years, and a thousand years are the same as one day. **9**And the Lord isn't slow about keeping His promises in the way some people understand the word "slow". The truth is that He's being patient with you people, since He doesn't want any people to be lost. Instead, He wants everyone to come to the point where they will change their minds and their way of living.*

10But the Lord's Day* will come like a thief.* And on that Day the heavens will disappear with the roar

of a terrible windstorm, and the stars and planets will be burned up and destroyed, and the earth and everything on it will be torn apart and destroyed.

¹¹And since everything is going to be destroyed like this, you can see what kind of people you must be. Your lives must be holy and god-like, ¹²and you must be the kind of people who are waiting for God's Day* to get here, and doing everything you can to make it come soon.* For on that Day the heavens will be set on fire and destroyed, and all the stars and planets will be burned up and melt away. ¹³But then according to God's promise, we're waiting for "a new heavens and a new earth",⁺ in which everything will be perfectly holy.*

¹⁴And so, my dear friends, while you're waiting for all this to happen, you must do everything you can so that God will find you to be spotless and perfect, having nothing to be afraid of or worry about.* ¹⁵And you must think of our Lord's patience as something which makes it possible for more people to be saved, just as our dear brother Paul wrote and told you, using the wisdom that God gave him.* ¹⁶He says the same thing in all his letters when he writes about these things.

And in his letters there are some things that are hard to understand, and people who aren't educated and firm in their faith twist these things to make them say something else, just as they do with the rest of the Bible. And by doing this, they are destroying themselves.

¹⁷But you, my dear friends, already know all this. And so you must be on your guard, so that you won't be led away with the others by the wrong ideas of these lawless men and fall away from your own firm and solid position. ¹⁸Instead, you must keep on growing in Christian love, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The glory and honor belong to Him both now and forever. And that's the truth.

JOHN'S FIRST LETTER

(Written between 80 and 90 A.D.)*

Jesus is the Word Who Gives Life

1 I'm writing to you about the Word who has been living since the very beginning,* the Word who gives Life.* We heard Him speak, and we saw Him with our own eyes. We looked at Him and touched Him with our own hands.*

2Yes, this Life* appeared so that people could see Him, and we saw Him. And now we're telling others what we know, as we bring them the news about this eternal Life, who was living with His Father, and has made Himself known to us.

3Now we're bringing the news about what we saw and heard to you people also, so that you too can be members of our group, which includes our Father and His Son Jesus Christ! **4**And we're writing all this down so that our hearts will be filled with joy.

God is Light, and We Must Live in the Light

5This is what He told us, and now we're passing it on to you. God is light,* and there can't be any darkness in Him at all. **6**So if we say that we're living with Him, and keep on living in the darkness,* we're lying and not telling the truth by what we're saying or doing. **7**But if we try to live in the light, in the same way that He is in the light, then we're all members of that same group,* and the blood of His Son Jesus washes away every sin and makes us clean.

8If we say that there's no sin in our lives, we're fooling ourselves, and there is no truth at all in our hearts. **9**But if we confess our sins, our faithful God, who always does what is right, will take away our sins and wash away everything that is dishonest and wrong, and make us clean.* **10**But if we say that we have

*Helpful notes for 1 John begin on page 860

never sinned, we're making God a liar, and His Word can't be in our hearts.

Jesus is Our Savior and Master

2 My little children, I'm writing you this letter so that you won't do anything sinful. But if anyone does sin, we have a Lawyer who will speak to our Father for us,* and our Lawyer is Jesus Christ, who never did anything wrong. **2**He's the One who made the sacrifice which covered over our sins and took away God's holy anger.* And He made that sacrifice not only for all our sins, but also for all the sins of every person in the whole world.*

3And if we try to keep His commandments,* we know that we really know Jesus.* **4**The person who says, "I know Him," but doesn't try to keep His commandments, is a liar, and there can't be any truth in his heart. **5**But the person who tries to do what Jesus tells him has reached the point where his heart is perfectly filled with God's kind of love. And this is how we know that we're in Him.* **6**The person who says that he's living in Jesus must try to live in exactly the same way Jesus lived.

A New Teaching

7Dear friends, I'm not writing to you about any new teaching, but an old teaching, which you have had from the beginning. This old teaching really is God's Word which you have heard. **8**On the other hand, this is a new teaching that I am writing to you about. It's a truth that has to do with Him, and also with you - the fact that the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining.*

9The person who says he's in the light and keeps on hating his brother or sister is still in the darkness. **10**The person who loves his brother and sister is living in the light. He won't do anything which will cause anyone to fall into sin and lose his faith. **11**But the person who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness. I mean that he's living in the darkness and doesn't

know where he's going, because the darkness has made him blind.

12 I'm writing to you little children,
because your sins are forgiven by
what Jesus did.

13 I'm writing to you fathers,
because you really know the one who was living
since the very beginning.*

I'm writing to you young men,
because you have won the victory over
the wicked one.

14 I wrote earlier to you little children,
because you really know our Father.

I wrote earlier to you fathers,
because you really know the one who was
living since the very beginning.

I wrote earlier to you young men,
because you're strong,
and God's Word is living in your hearts,
and you have won the victory over the wicked one.

The Christian and the World

15 You must stop loving the world,* and the things in the world. For if a person loves the world, there can't be any love for God in his heart. **16** You see, the world is filled with sinful desires which come from our sinful minds and bodies,* and sinful desires for the things we see all around us, and boasting about the things we own. And none of these things could ever come from our Father. They all come from the world. **17** And the world and all its sinful desires are going to disappear.* But the person who does what God wants will live forever.

The Enemy Power

18 My dear little children, the last hour* has come, and you have heard that an Enemy of Christ is coming.* But the truth is that a lot of enemies of Christ are already here.* And this is how we know that it's the last hour. **19** These enemies of Christ have come from

our own group, but of course they never were really one of us. If they had been one of us, they would have stayed with us. But they all left us, so that everyone can see that they were never one of us.

20But the Holy One has anointed* you, so that you all know this. **21**Therefore I haven't written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it; and you know that no lie ever comes from the truth.

22And the person who says that Jesus is not the promised Savior* is a liar.* That person is an enemy of Christ. And he is saying that he doesn't want anything to do with either the Father or His Son. **23**You see, the person who says that he doesn't want anything to do with the Son can have nothing to do with His Father.* But the person who tells others that the Son is his Lord also has His Father as his Lord.

24So you people must keep in your hearts the things you have heard from the beginning. And if you do keep these things you have heard from the beginning in your hearts, you will be living in the Son and in the Father.* **25**And this is what Jesus himself promised to give us - eternal Life.*

26I wrote these same things earlier about those people who are trying to fool you and lead you astray. **27**But Christ has poured out His Holy Spirit on you, and that Spirit is living in your hearts right now, so that you don't need any teacher. Instead, His Spirit is teaching you everything,* and He is a true teacher, and can't possibly be a false one. So you must keep on living in Jesus, just as the Spirit has taught you.

28And now especially, dear children, you must keep on living in Jesus,* so that when He comes back again, we can have courage and confidence, and won't have to run and hide from Him in shame when He gets here.

What it Means to be God's Children

29If you know that Christ is perfectly holy and without sin, you also know that every person who does what

God says has been born again as God's child.

3 And see what a wonderful kind of love our Father has given us, that we should be called God's children. And that's what we are! And this is why the world doesn't really know or understand us. It's because they have never really known God.

2 Dear friends, right now we're God's children, but He hasn't told us yet what we're going to be. We do know that when Jesus comes back again so that everyone can see Him, we're going to be like Him, because we're going to see Him as He really is. **3** And every person who has this hope about Jesus tries to make himself just as pure and clean as Jesus is.

4 Everyone who does something sinful is also breaking the Law, because that's what sin is - breaking God's Law. **5** And you know that Jesus came into the world to take away all sins, and also that there can't possibly be any sin in Him. **6** So no person who is living in Jesus* keeps on sinning; and no person who keeps on sinning has ever seen Jesus or really known Him.

7 Dear children, don't let anyone fool you or lead you astray. The person who tries to do what God says is right is perfectly holy in God's sight,* just as Jesus is perfectly holy in God's sight. **8** The person who keeps on sinning is a child of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the very beginning. And so the reason why God's Son came into the world was to destroy everything the devil has done.

9 No child of God keeps on sinning, because God Himself is living in him. And so he can't keep on sinning, because he is God's child. **10** And this makes it possible for everyone to see who are God's children and who are the devil's children. The person who doesn't do what God says is right can't be God's child.

You must Love One Another

And the person who doesn't love his brother and sister can't be God's child either, **11** because the message you have heard from the beginning says that we must

love one another,* ¹²and not be like Cain, the wicked one's child, who murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because the things Cain did were wicked, while the things his brother did were right.

¹³Don't be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.* ¹⁴The fact that we love our brothers and sisters makes us sure that we have passed out of death into Life,* while the person who has no love in his heart is still dead. ¹⁵And everyone who hates his brother or sister is a murderer;* and you know that no murderer has eternal Life in his heart.

¹⁶We know what love is when we look at Jesus, because He gave His life for us. And so we must try to give our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷But how can a person's heart be filled with God's kind of love if he has some money, and sees that his brother needs help, and refuses to have any feeling of pity for him? ¹⁸Dear children, our love must not be just a lot of words and talk.* It must be true love which shows itself by doing something.

How We Can be Confident before God

¹⁹And this is how we will know that we're children of the Truth, and that we will have nothing to worry about when we stand before God, ²⁰because even if our own heart condemns us, we know that God is greater than our heart, and that He knows everything.

²¹But if our heart doesn't condemn us, dear friends, we have real courage and confidence when we think about God. ²²And we will get whatever we ask Him for, because we're trying to keep His commandments and do the things that please Him. ²³And the commandment He gave us says that we must believe in His Son Jesus Christ* and love one another, just as He commanded us to do.* ²⁴So the person who is trying to keep His commandments is living in Jesus, and Jesus is living in him.* And we know that He's living in us from the Spirit He has given us.*

The Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Enemy

4 Dear friends, you must stop believing every prophet who claims to have the Spirit. Instead, you must keep on testing such prophets to see if they come from God, because there are many false prophets in the world today. **2** And this is how you can recognize the prophet who has God's Spirit. Every prophet who teaches that Jesus is the promised Savior* who came into the world with a true human body has God's Spirit. **3** And any prophet who doesn't teach this about Jesus can't possibly have God's Spirit.* Such a prophet has the spirit of an enemy of Christ. You have heard that such an enemy spirit is coming; but the truth is that it's here in the world right now.*

4 Dear children, you are God's children; and you have already won the victory over these prophets who are enemies of Christ. Because the one who is in you is more powerful than the one who is in the world. **5** These enemy prophets are a part of the world,* and this is why they talk like people of the world, and why the world listens to them. **6** But we are God's children. And so the person who knows God listens to us, and the one who isn't God's child doesn't listen to us. This is how we tell the difference between the prophet who has the true Spirit and one who has a false spirit.

God is Love

7 Dear friends, we must love one another, because Christian love comes from God. And every person who loves others is God's child and knows God. **8** But the person who doesn't love others has never known God, because God is love. **9** You see, God sent His only Son into the world to give us Life; and this is how He showed us His love. **10** And this also shows us what Christian love is. It isn't that we love God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the One who would make the sacrifice to cover over all our sins and take away God's holy anger.*

11Dear friends, since this is the way God loved us, we must also love one another. **12**No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God is living in us, and we have reached the point where our hearts are perfectly filled with His kind of love.

13We know that we're living in God and He's living in us because His Spirit is living within us. **14**And we're telling you that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world, and that we have seen Him. **15**And we're also telling you that God is living in every person who tells others that Jesus is God's Son, and that person is living in God.* **16**And so we really know the love which God has for us, and we're trusting in that love.

God is love. And so the person who tries to live in His kind of love is living in God, and God is living in him. **17**And this is how God's love has reached its goal among us. And therefore we can have courage and confidence on Judgment Day, because we're trying to live just like Jesus did in this world.

18You see, there can't be any fear with this kind of love. Instead, this perfect love drives out fear, because fear makes us think of punishment. And so when a person is afraid, his love isn't perfect.

19We love because God loved us first. **20**If someone says, "I love God," and keeps on hating his brother or sister, that person is a liar. After all, the person who doesn't love his brother or sister whom he sees, can't love God whom he has never seen. **21**And the commandment God gave us says that the person who loves God must also love his brother and sister.*

The Believer Wins the Victory over the World

5 Every person who believes that Jesus is the promised Savior is God's child.* And every person who loves a father also loves his child. **2**And so when we love God and try to obey His commandments, we know that we're loving God's children. **3**After all, love for God is trying to keep His commandments. And His commandments aren't a heavy load, **4**because every

child of God is winning the victory over the world.* And our faith is the thing which wins the victory over the world. ⁵And so the one who wins the victory over the world is the one who believes that Jesus is God's Son.

The Son's Witnesses

⁶Jesus is the One who came into the world as our Messiah,*being baptized by water and blood - not by water only, but by water and blood.* And the One who tells us this is the Spirit, because the Spirit is the Truth.* ⁷And so there are three witnesses, ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are all saying the same thing.*

⁹When other people tell us what they have seen and heard, we believe what they say. But anything God tells us is certainly much more truthful. And this is what God has told us about His Son. ¹⁰So the person who believes in God's Son has what God tells us in his heart. The person who doesn't believe God has made God a liar, because he doesn't believe the things God has told us about His Son. ¹¹And God tells us that He has given us eternal Life, and this Life comes to us by His Son.* ¹²So the person who has the Son has this Life; and the one who doesn't have God's Son doesn't have this Life.

The Blessings of being God's Children

¹³I have written this letter to you people who believe in God's Son, so that you will know that you have eternal Life.* ¹⁴And we have such courage and confidence when we think of God that we can ask for anything that is pleasing to God and be sure that He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, we also know that we will get whatever we have asked Him for.

¹⁶If a person sees his brother doing something sinful which can be forgiven, he must pray, and God will give him Life, since He does this for those who do sinful things which can be forgiven. However there

is a sin which can't be forgiven;* and I'm not saying that anyone should ask God to forgive that sin. ¹⁷Every dishonest and wrong thing is a sin; but there certainly are sins which can be forgiven.

¹⁸We know that no child of God keeps on sinning, because God's Son keeps him safe, and the wicked one can't touch him. ¹⁹We also know that we are God's children, and that the whole world is lying under the power of the wicked one.

²⁰And we know that God's Son has come into the world, and has given us the understanding we need to know the true God. And so we are living in His Son, Jesus Christ,* who is the true God. Yes, He is the true God, and He is eternal Life!*

²¹Dear children, stay away from idols!

JOHN'S SECOND LETTER

(Written between 80 and 90 A.D.)

¹This letter is from the apostle, and I'm writing to my favorite lady* and her children, whom I love sincerely. And I'm not the only one who feels this way. Everyone who knows the truth does too.

²I'm writing to you because of the truth which is living in our hearts, and will be ours forever. ³And we shall continue to enjoy the undeserved love and mercy and peace of God our Father and Jesus Christ, His Son, along with their truth and love.

We Must Hold on to the Things God has Told Us

⁴ I was very happy when I learned that many of your children are living by the truth, just as our Father's commandment tells us to do.

⁵And now, dear lady, I have something to ask you. It isn't as though I was writing to give you a new commandment. It's the same commandment we have always had from the very beginning, that we must love one another.* ⁶And Christian love* means that we must live according to God's commandments. And His commandment means that your lives must be ruled by Christian love, just as you heard from the very beginning.

⁷I'm telling you this because many dishonest men have gone out into the world who will try to fool you and lead you astray. They don't believe and teach that Jesus Christ came into the world with a true human body.* Anyone who says this is a false prophet and an enemy of Christ.* ⁸Therefore you must be watching yourselves, so that you won't lose what you have worked for, but will get everything you have coming.

⁹When a person no longer lives by what Jesus taught, but goes on to some new teaching, that person has

lost God completely. But the person who keeps on living by God's teaching is holding on to both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰So if anyone comes to you and doesn't bring you this teaching, don't let him into your house or even say "Good morning" to him. ¹¹For the person who gives such a man his good wishes becomes a partner in the wicked things he's doing.

¹²I have a lot of things to tell you, but I didn't want to write them down on paper. Instead, I hope to come and see you, and talk to you face to face, so that we can all be completely happy.

¹³Your favorite sister's* children send you their greetings.

*Helpful notes for 2 John are on page 864

JOHN'S THIRD LETTER

(Written between 80 and 90 A.D.)

1This letter is from the apostle, and I'm writing to my dear friend Gaius, whom I love most sincerely.

2My dear friend, I know that all is going well with your soul, and I pray that you're also in good physical health, and that everything else is going well for you.

3You see, I was happy when some of our brothers came and told me that you are always speaking the truth, just as you are always living by the truth. **4**Nothing makes me happier than hearing that my children are living by the truth.

As Christians We Must Support the Lord's Work

5My dear friend, whatever you are doing for our brothers and sisters is a real act of faith, especially when they're travelers. **6**Some of these travelers have told the people in the other churches about your Christian love;* and you will be doing a fine thing if you keep on sending them on their way in a God-pleasing way. **7**You see, they have gone out to do His work without taking any help from unbelievers. **8**We're the ones, therefore, who have to support such men, so that we can become their fellow workers in spreading the truth.

9I wrote a letter to your church, but that fellow Diotrophes, who loves to run everything, won't take any orders or suggestions from us. **10**And so if I come to see you, I'm going to remind him of what he's doing by saying wicked and untrue things about us. But even this doesn't satisfy him. He won't make our brothers welcome either, and he keeps those who do want to welcome them from doing so, and tries to throw them out of the church.

11My dear friend, don't follow this bad example. Follow the good one. The person who does good things

belongs to God's family; but the person who does bad things has never seen God.

12Everyone has good things to say about Demetrius.* And the truth itself is singing his praises.* We also have the same good things to say about him, and you know that what we say is true.

13I have a lot of things to tell you, but I don't want to write them to you with pen and ink. **14**But I hope to see you very soon, and then we'll talk face to face.

15You have nothing to be afraid of or worry about.* Your friends send you their greetings. Give each one of my friends my personal greeting.

*Helpful notes for 3 John are on page 864

A LETTER FROM JUDAS

(Sometimes Juda or Jude)

(Written about 75 A.D.)

¹This letter is from Judas,* a slave of Jesus the promised Savior,* and a brother of James.*

And I'm writing to the people whom God our Father has called because He loves them, and who are being kept safe by Jesus Christ.

² I pray that God will fill your hearts and lives with His mercy, peace* and love.

A Warning against the Wicked Men in Your Midst

³My dear friends, I have always wanted very much to write to you about the salvation God has given to all of us. But now I felt I had to write and urge you to keep on fighting for that faith which has been passed along to all of God's people.* ⁴You see, some godless people have slipped into your group without any of you knowing about it. But in the Bible God told us about these people a long time ago, and about the punishment He's going to give them. They're people who are turning the undeserved love of our God into something filthy and immoral, and they're saying that they don't want anything to do with Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

Some Bad Examples from the Past

⁵Even though you know all this, I want to remind you first, that the Lord rescued His people out of the land of Egypt, and second, that later on He destroyed those who didn't believe in Him. ⁶And you must also remember the angels* who didn't hold onto the high place God gave them, but left their home. God has been keeping them all this time in darkness, tied with chains that will never be removed, for the Judgment

*Helpful notes for Judas begin on page 864

on the Great Day.* ⁷And then you must remember the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, who did the same kind of things as the angels. They practiced every kind of sexual immorality, even having sex with animals. Remember that these people are already receiving their punishment of eternal fire, and in this way they're serving as examples to others.

These Wicked Men are Like the Examples Above

⁸These men I'm warning you about are also doing the same things. They see things in their dreams which make them do things that make their bodies unclean. They have no respect for the Lord's authority, and they say false and insulting things about the angels. ⁹Even Michael, the head of all the angels, never did that. When he was quarreling with the devil, as they were arguing about Moses' body, he didn't dare to condemn the devil with any insulting words. Instead, he said, "I'm asking the Lord to punish you".⁺

¹⁰But these men say false and insulting things about things they know nothing about, and they're being destroyed by things they understand by instinct, like the wild animals that have no mind or intelligence. ¹¹But how terrible it's going to be for them, because they have followed in Cain's footsteps. And they have been swept away into Balaam's error of asking pay for their services as prophets. And they have destroyed themselves by speaking against God's authorities, like Korah did.*

¹²These men are dirty spots as they boldly eat with you at your love feasts.* They take care of only themselves. They're like clouds without water, being driven along by the winds, or trees in the late fall that have no fruit, but doubly dead, since they have been pulled up out of the ground roots and all. ¹³They're like wild ocean waves that are all covered with the foam of their shameful acts and deeds, or like falling stars

⁺Verses quoted in Judas are on page 880

for whom God is keeping a place in the deepest darkness forever.

14Enoch, who was the seventh in the list of Adam's descendants, also spoke about these men as one of God's prophets. "Listen carefully," he said. "The Lord is coming with many thousands of His holy angels **15**to judge all men and women, and to punish every person for all the godless things they have done in their godless ways. And He will punish the godless sinners for all the nasty things they have said about Him".*

16These false prophets are always complaining and finding fault with others, while their lives are controlled by their sinful desires. And their mouths are always saying boastful things about themselves and flattering things about the people who can do something nice for them.

Warnings and Instructions

17And now, my dear friends, you must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said some time ago, **18**because they told you that in the last days* there will be people who will make fun of you, and their lives will be controlled by their own godless, sinful desires.* **19**These are the men who are now creating divisions in your group. They live like animals, because they don't have the Spirit.

20aBut you, dear friends, **21**are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ in His mercy to bring you into eternal Life. And so you must keep yourselves in God's kind of love, **20b**and keep on building your lives on the foundation of your most holy faith, as you keep on praying constantly by the power of the Holy Spirit. **22**You must also show mercy to those people who are really in doubt, **23**and try to save some of the others by snatching them out of the fire, and show mercy to those who are frightened. But at the same time you must hate even their clothes, which are stained and soiled by their sinful minds and bodies.*

24The one true God is able to keep you from falling, and make you stand before Him, spotlessly clean and filled with joy, as you look at His shining heavenly beauty. **25**And this God has saved us through the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. And therefore to Him alone belongs the glory and honor, the greatness, the power, and the authority from every past age, and now, and forever and ever! Yes, it really does!

THE REVELATION GIVEN TO JOHN

(Written on Patmos, about 95 A.D.)

1 This book tells about things that Jesus the promised Savior* told us, and these things are going to happen very soon.+ It was God who gave Jesus this information to make known to His slaves. And Jesus sent His angel to His slave John and told him all about these things. **2** And now John has made his report about what God's Word says, and what Jesus the promised Savior told him, and all the things he saw.

3 The person who reads this book and the people who hear what God is telling them in this book and hold fast to the things that are written there, are truly happy people, because the time is getting close.

Greetings to the Churches

4 This letter is from John; and I'm writing to the seven churches in the province of Asia.* The one who is* and who was and is going to come sends you His love which no one deserves and His peace.* And so do the seven spirits* who are in front of His throne, **5** and Jesus the promised Savior, who is the kind of a witness you can believe. He is the first one to come back to life again from the dead, and "the one who rules over the kings of the earth".+ He is also the one who loves us, and has "set us free from our sins"+ by His own blood. **6** And He has made us a Kingdom of "priests who serve our God",+ His Father; and the glory, honor and power belong to Him forever and ever. Yes, it really does!

7 "Remember this! He is coming with the clouds!"⁺
And every person "is going to see Him,"*

*Helpful notes for Revelation begin on page 865

+Verses quoted in Revelation begin on page 880

including the kind of people who "stabbed Him.

And all the nations of the earth will moan and pound their chests in grief because of Him."⁺

Yes, indeed! ⁸"I am the 'A' and the 'Z',"* says the Lord, "the God who is and who was and is going to come. I am the Almighty!"

Jesus Appears to John in a Vision

⁹I (John) am your brother, and a citizen of the same Kingdom you are. So I'm also suffering the same way you are, and with Jesus' help I'm patiently holding on to my faith, just as you are.

I was sent to the island of Patmos* because I believe God's Word and the things Jesus told us. ¹⁰And on the Lord's Day* something strange happened to me. It was just as though I had been taken into a different world, where I was seeing and hearing only spiritual things.* And I heard a loud voice behind me, which sounded like a loud bugle. ¹¹It was saying, "Write down what you're going to see in a book and send it to the seven churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²Then I turned around to see who was talking to me, and I saw seven gold lampstands,* ¹³and in the middle of the lampstands I saw someone who "looked like the Son of Man."*⁺ "He was wearing a long outer cloak that went down to His feet, with a gold belt"⁺ around His waist. ¹⁴"His head and hair were as white as wool, as white as snow".⁺ "His eyes were like fiery flames, ¹⁵and His feet looked like brass"⁺ when it's red hot in the furnace. "His voice sounded like the roar of many waterfalls".⁺ ¹⁶He was holding seven stars in His right hand, and there was "a sharp, double-edged sword coming out of His mouth",⁺ and His face was shining like the sun at its brightest.

¹⁷When I saw Him, I fell down on the ground at His feet, like a dead man. But then He put His right hand on me and said, "You mustn't be afraid. I AM* 'the first and the last',⁺ ¹⁸the Living One. I was dead,

but as you can see, now I'm alive forever and ever. And I have the keys of death and the grave. ¹⁹Therefore you must write down the things you have seen, and the things that are going on now, and the things that are going to happen in the future.

²⁰"This is the secret meaning of the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and the seven gold lampstands. The seven stars are the pastors* of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

The Letter to the Church in Ephesus

² "Write this letter to the pastor of the church in Ephesus: 'This letter comes from the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and walks in the middle of the seven gold lampstands.

² 'I know what you have been doing, and how hard you have worked, and how patiently you have held on to your faith. And I know that you can't stand to have anything to do with bad people; and that you have tested those men who say that they are apostles when they aren't, and have found out that they're liars.

³ I also know that you have great patience, and that you have carried a heavy load for my sake, and haven't quit.

⁴ But there's one thing you have done that I don't like. You have lost the Christian love* you had at first.

⁵ And therefore you must remember how far you have fallen, and change your minds and your way of living, and live the way you did at first. And if you don't do as I say and don't change your minds and your way of living, I'm going to come and see you and take your lampstand out of its place.

⁶ But you're doing this good thing. You hate the things the Nicolaitans* are doing, just as I do.

⁷ I will give the person who wins the victory the right to eat from the Tree of Life,⁺ which is in God's garden.* Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!"

The Letter to the Church in Smyrna

8"And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Smyrna:

"This letter comes from "the First and the Last,"* the one who died and came back to Life.

9 'I know about all your troubles, and how poor you are; but you are really rich. And I know about the nasty and insulting things those people who claim to be Jews are saying about you. They aren't really Jews, of course, but a group of people who belong to Satan.

10 You mustn't be at all afraid of the things you're going to suffer. But I'm warning you that the devil is going to throw some of you into jail to test your faith, and your troubles will last ten days.* Remember that you must keep on being faithful to me until you die, and then I will give you Life as your crown.*

11 The person who wins the victory will not be hurt at all by the second death.* Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!

The Letter to the Church in Pergamum

12"And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Pergamum:

"This letter comes from the one who has "the sharp, double-edged sword".

13 'I know that you're living right there where Satan rules as king. And I know that you're staying true to me, and that you didn't give up your faith in me even during the time when my faithful witness Antipas was killed right there in your city, where Satan has his home.

14 But you have done a few things I don't like. You have some people there who are following the teachings of Balaam. Balaam was the man who taught Balak how to set a trap for the people of Israel, to get them to fall into sin by eating meat which had been sacrificed to idols, and doing business with temple prostitutes.†

15 And in the same way, you also have some people

who are following the teachings of the Nicolaitans.*

16 And therefore you must change your minds and your way of living. Because if you don't, I'm going to come to you very soon; and when I get there, I will fight against those people with the sword I have in my mouth!*

17 I will give the person who wins the victory some of the hidden manna. And I will also give him a white stone, on which will be written "a new name",⁺ which no one knows except the person who receives it. Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!"

The Letter to the Church in Thyatira

18 And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Thyatira:

"This letter comes from God's Son, whose eyes are like fiery flames, and "whose feet look like brass."

19 I know what you have been doing. And I know about your Christian love,* and your faith, and the work you have done to help others, and how patiently you have held on to your faith. I also know that you're doing more now than you did at first.

20 But there's one thing you have done that I don't like. You haven't done anything about that woman Jezebel,* who calls herself a prophet. But she's fooling my slaves and leading them astray, teaching them to do business with temple prostitutes, and to eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols.

21 I have given her time to change her mind and her way of living, but she won't change her mind or her sinful life. **22** And I'm warning you that I'm going to throw her into a bed, and her lovers with her, and make them all suffer terribly unless they change their minds and turn away from the things she's leading them to do. **23** Yes, I will kill all her followers. And then all the churches will know that I'm "the One who knows what is in men's minds and hearts",⁺ and "I will

give each of you exactly what you deserve".⁺

24 But to the rest of you there in Thyatira who don't follow this teaching, and have never learned Satan's "deeper truths",* as they call them, I'm saying that I won't ask you to do anything more **25** than I have already told you - hold on to what you have until I come!

26a And the person who wins the victory and keeps on doing the things I tell him to do until he dies will receive from me **28a** the same authority I have received from my Father.

26b I will give him authority over the nations;

27 and he will rule them with an iron rod, and smash them to pieces like clay pots".⁺

28b And I will also give him the morning star.

29 Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!"

The Letter to the Church in Sardis

3 "And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Sardis:

"This letter comes from the one who holds the seven spirits of God* and the seven stars.*

"I know what you have been doing. And I know that people think you're really a "live" group, but the truth is that you're really dead.

2 And so those who are still alive must wake up and strengthen the remaining members who have been ready to die for some time. You see, I haven't found the things you have done to be the kind of perfect things my God wants. **3** Remember therefore what you were taught and how it came to you, and hold on to these things. And you must change your minds and your way of living, because if you don't wake up, I'm going to come like a thief,⁺ and you'll never know what time it's going to be when I will arrive.

4 But you have a few people there in Sardis who haven't gotten their clothes all dirty; and these people

will live with me, dressed in white* clothing, for they are the kind of people who deserve this.

5'The person who wins the victory will be dressed in white clothing; and I will never "erase his name from the Book of Life".⁺ And "in the presence of my Father and His angels I will say that this person is my follower".

6'Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!'

The Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

7"And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Philadelphia:

'This letter comes from the one who is holy and true, the one who holds "David's key in His hand.

When He opens the door, no one can shut it, and when He shuts the door, no one can open it".⁺

8And I want you to notice that I have put a door in front of you which is standing wide open, and no one is able to shut it.

'I know what you have been doing, and I know that you have a little strength, and that you have believed and done what I have told you, and haven't denied the fact that you belong to me.

9'So listen carefully! Satan has a meeting house there in Philadelphia. Its members call themselves Jews, but they're lying, because they aren't. But I'm telling you that I'm going to make them "come and fall down on the ground at your feet, with their foreheads on the ground".*⁺ And then they will know that "I have loved you".⁺

10 'I told you that you must patiently hold on to your faith, and you believed me and have done what I told you. And therefore I'm going to keep you safe, so that you won't have to go through the time of testing which is going to come upon the whole world to test the people who live there.

11'I'm going to come soon. Therefore you must

hold on tight to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. ¹²And I will make the person who wins the victory a pillar in my God's Temple, and he will never leave that Temple again. I will also write my God's name on him, and "the name of my God's city",⁺ the new Jerusalem, which is going to come down out of heaven from my God;* and I will also write "my own new name"⁺ on him.

¹³Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!"

The Letter to the Church in Laodicea

¹⁴And write this letter to the pastor of the church in Laodicea:

'This letter comes from the Amen,* the witness who can be trusted to tell the truth, the one who created everything as God wanted it.

¹⁵ 'I know what you have been doing, and that you aren't either cold or hot. Oh how I wish that you were either one or the other! ¹⁶But since this is the way you are, just barely warm, and neither hot or cold, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth.

¹⁷You're saying, "'I'm rich and wealthy'.⁺ I have everything I need." And you don't realize that you're really poor, and blind and naked, that you're such miserable creatures that everyone should pity you.

¹⁸And so I'm advising you to buy gold from me, which has been made pure in the fire, so that you will be rich, and white clothes to put on, so that people can't see your shameful nakedness, and salve to rub on your eyes, so that you can see.

¹⁹ ' "I scold all those I love"⁺ when they do wrong, and I punish them to teach them a lesson.* Therefore you must be serious about being a Christian, and change your minds and your way of living.

²⁰Listen to me! Right now I'm standing just outside the door, knocking. And if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his house and

we will have dinner together.* 21 I will also give the person who wins the victory the right to sit beside me on my throne, just as I took my seat beside my Father on His throne after I had won the victory.

22'Now think about what the Spirit is saying to the churches!' "

God's Throne in Heaven

4 Some time later I saw something wonderful. There was a door standing wide open in the sky. And I heard the same voice talking to me which I had heard before, the one which sounded like a loud bugle. "Come up here!" said the voice, "and I'll show you the things which must happen in the future."

2Then all of a sudden something strange happened to me. Again it was just as though I had been taken into a different world, where I was seeing and hearing only spiritual things. For suddenly there was a throne standing there in the sky, and someone sitting on it.†

3And the one who was sitting there looked like a combination of a diamond and a ruby. And there was a rainbow around the throne which looked like an emerald.

4And around the throne I saw twenty-four* other thrones; and sitting on those thrones were twenty-four older men. They were dressed in white robes and had gold crowns on their heads.

5Then I saw flashes of lightning coming out of the throne, and the sound of voices and crashes of thunder.† There were also seven lighted lamps* burning in front of the throne. These lamps are the seven spirits of God. 6And in front of the throne there was something like a glass lake that looked like ice.

And right close to the throne on all sides there were four animals that were covered with eyes, both in front and behind. 7"The first animal looked like a lion, the second one looked like a young bull, the third one had a face like a man, and the fourth one looked like a flying eagle".† 8"Each one" of the four all-seeing animals "had six wings",† and "they were covered with

eyes"⁺ on all sides, and even on the inside. And day or night they never stop saying,

" 'Holy, holy, holy
is the almighty Lord, our God'.⁺
who was, and 'who is' and who is going to come."

⁹The one who was sitting on the throne is the one "who is living forever and ever".⁺ And when the all-seeing animals give glory and honor and thanks to Him, ¹⁰the twenty-four older men throw their crowns down in front of the throne, and fall down in front of the one who is sitting on the throne with their foreheads on the ground, and worship* the one "who is living forever and ever".⁺ And as they worship, they keep on saying,

¹¹ "Oh Lord our God, You are the only one
who is wise and powerful enough
to receive the glory and honor and power,
because You have created everything.
Yes, all things came to be and were created
because this is what You wanted."

The Book and the Lamb

⁵ Then I saw a book* in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. It was "covered with writing, both inside and outside;"⁺ and it was sealed shut with seven seals. ²Next I saw a big strong angel who was making an announcement in a loud voice, "Who is able to break the seals and open the book?"

³But there wasn't anyone in heaven or earth or under the earth who was able to open the book and see what was written in it. ⁴So I began to cry real hard, because they couldn't find anyone who was able to open that book and see what was written in it.

⁵But then one of the older men said to me, "Stop crying! Look! 'The Lion* from Judah's tribe,'⁺ the 'sprout from David's root,'⁺ has won the victory, so that He can break the seven seals and open the book."

⁶And then I saw a Lamb* standing in the space between the throne and the four all-seeing animals, and right

in the middle of the older men. It looked like it had been killed as a sacrifice,⁺ and it had seven horns and seven eyes. "which are the seven spirits of God, that He sends out all over the earth".⁺

⁷Then the Lamb went and took the book out of the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne.

⁸And when He had the book in His hand, the four all-seeing animals and the twenty-four older men fell down in front of the Lamb. Each of the older men had a harp, and they all had gold bowls which were filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. ⁹And they were all singing "a new song:"⁺

"You are able to take the book
and open its seals,
because You were killed as a sacrifice,
and with Your blood You have bought people
from every tribe, language, race and nation
to be God's people.

¹⁰ And You have made them 'a kingdom of priests
to serve our God;⁺
and they will rule over the earth."

¹¹And when I looked again, I heard the voices of many angels. They were standing in a circle around the throne and the all-seeing animals and the older men, "millions and billions of them".⁺ ¹²And they were singing like one thunderous voice,

"The Lamb who was killed as a sacrifice
is the right one
to receive the power and wealth
and wisdom and strength and honor
and glory and praise!"⁺

¹³And then I heard all the creatures in the whole universe singing, every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the ocean. They were saying,

"To the One who is sitting on the throne,
and to the Lamb, belong the praise, honor, glory
and power, forever and ever!"

¹⁴And the four all-seeing animals said, "Yes! They

have spoken the truth!" Then the older men fell down with their foreheads on the ground and worshiped.

The Lamb Opens the Seals

6 Then I watched while the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. And when it was opened, I heard one of the four all-seeing animals talking in a voice that sounded like thunder, "Come here!"

2 And when I looked, I saw just as plain as could be a white horse;⁺ and the man sitting on it had a bow in his hand. Then someone gave him a crown, and he rode off as a conqueror to defeat his enemies.

3 And when the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second animal saying, "Come here!"

4 And then another horse came out. This one was red;⁺ and the man who was sitting on it was given the power to take away peace from the earth, so that men would slaughter one another. And then someone gave him a large sword.

5 And when the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third animal saying, "Come here!"



A PAIR OF SCALES

And when I looked, I saw just as plain as could be a black* horse;⁺ and the man sitting on it had a pair of scales* in his hand. **6** Then I heard a voice which seemed to come from the middle of the four all-seeing animals. It was saying, "A quart of wheat sells

for a dinar,* and three quarts of barley sell for a dinar, and don't do anything to spoil the oil and wine!"

7 And when the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth animal saying, "Come here!"

8 And when I looked, I saw just as plain as could be a pale yellow horse; and the name of the man sitting on it was Death. And the Grave was following along

right behind him. And they were given control over a fourth of the earth, to kill people with the sword, famine, illness, disease and wild animals.

⁹And when the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those people who had been killed because they believed God's Word and had told other people what they had learned from it. ¹⁰And they yelled at the top of their voices, "Master, You are holy and truthful. How long will You wait before You bring the people who are living on the earth to trial, and punish them for killing us"?⁺

¹¹Then someone gave each one of them a white robe, and they were told that some more of their fellow slaves and brothers and sisters would also be killed, just as they had been, and that they should rest a little while longer, until the last one was killed.

¹²Then I watched while the Lamb opened the sixth seal. And when He did, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black, like sackcloth* made of black hair, and the whole moon became blood-red.⁺

¹³Then the stars of the sky fell to the earth,⁺ just like the overripe fruit falls from a fig tree when it is shaken by a strong wind. ¹⁴And "the layer of air around the earth was rolled up like a book* and disappeared,"⁺ and every mountain and island was moved from its place.

¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the high government officials and generals, and the rich and powerful people, and every slave and free man "hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks on the mountains".⁺ ¹⁶And they were saying to the mountains and rocks, " 'Fall on us, and hide us'⁺ from the eyes of the one who is sitting on the throne, and from the holy anger of the Lamb, ¹⁷because 'the great Day of their holy anger has come, and who can stand up against it'?"⁺

All Believers Receive God's Brand Mark

⁷ After this I saw four angels standing at "the four corners of the earth," holding back "the four winds",⁺

so that no wind would blow over the earth or the ocean or against any tree. ²And then I saw another angel, coming up from the east. He was holding the seal of the living God, and he yelled at the top of his voice to the four angels, who had been given the power to do great damage to the earth and the ocean. ³He said to them, "You must do no damage to the earth or the ocean, or the trees, until we have put God's brand mark* on the foreheads of His slaves".⁺

⁴And I also heard how many were branded. It was 144,000 people,* from every tribe in the nation of Israel.*

⁵ Twelve thousand were branded from the tribe of
Judah,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Reuben,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Gad,

⁶ twelve thousand from the tribe of Asher,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Naphtali,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Manasseh,

⁷ twelve thousand from the tribe of Simeon,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Levi,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Issachar,

⁸ twelve thousand from the tribe of Zebulon,

twelve thousand from the tribe of Joseph, and

twelve thousand were branded from the tribe of
Benjamin.

The Great Crowd around the Throne

⁹After this I saw just as plain as could be a great crowd of people standing in front of the throne, and in front of the Lamb. There were so many that no one could count them all, and they came from every nation and tribe, from every race and language. They were all dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and they were yelling at the top of their voices,

"We have been saved by our God,

who is sitting on the throne, and by the Lamb!"

¹¹And all the angels were standing in a circle around the throne, and the older men and the four all-seeing animals; and they all fell down in front of the throne,

with their faces to the ground, and worshiped God,
12saying,

"Yes! They have spoken the truth!
Praise and glory and wisdom,
and thanks and honor and power and might
belong to our God forever and ever!
Yes, it really does!"

13Then one of the older men spoke up and said to me, "Do you know who these people are who are dressed in white robes, and where they come from?"

14And I said to him, "Sir, you're the one who knows that."

And he replied, "These are the people who have come out of 'the time of great suffering'.⁺* They have washed their robes and made them white by the blood of the Lamb.

15 And this is why they are standing
in front of God's throne,
and are worshiping and serving Him
in His temple day and night.
And the one who is sitting on the throne
will spread His tent over them.

16 'They won't be hungry any more,
and they won't be thirsty any more;
and the sun won't beat down on them,
nor any burning heat',⁺

17 because the Lamb who is in the middle by the
throne 'will be their Shepherd'.⁺
'He will lead them to the springs of living water';⁺
'And God will wipe away every tear'⁺ from their
eyes."

The Seventh Seal is Opened

8 And when the Lamb opened the seventh seal, everything became completely quiet in heaven for about a half an hour.

2And I watched while seven angels who are standing in front of God were given seven bugles.

3Then another angel came and stood in front of

the incense altar. He was holding a gold incense burner, and someone gave him a whole lot of incense, so that he could mix it with the prayers of all God's people,⁺ which were on "the gold incense altar" in front of the throne.⁺ ⁴And when he did this, the smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of God's people, went up out of the angel's hand as he stood there in front of God.

⁵Then the angel "took the incense burner and filled it with some of the burning coals from the incense altar",⁺ and threw it down upon the earth. And at once there were crashes of thunder, loud voices, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.⁺

The First Four Angels Blow Their Bugles

⁶Then the seven angels* who had the seven bugles got ready to blow them.

⁷And when the first angel blew his bugle, "hail and fire",⁺ mixed with blood, came pouring down upon the earth. And a third of the earth and a third of the trees and all the green grass were burned up.

⁸Then the second angel blew his bugle, and what looked like a huge mountain all on fire was thrown into the ocean. And a third of the ocean was turned to blood,⁺ ⁹a third of the living creatures in the ocean died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰Then the third angel blew his bugle, and a huge star that was burning like a torch fell out of the sky and landed on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star was Bitterroot,⁺ so a third of the water on earth became bitter, and many people died from drinking the water, because it had been poisoned.

¹²Then the fourth angel blew his bugle, and something struck a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars, making that third of them dark. And so for a third of the day and a third of the night there was no light.⁺

¹³Next I saw a single eagle flying through the air,

and I heard him shouting at the top of his voice, "A great disaster! A great disaster! A great disaster will strike the people who are living on the earth at the sound of the bugle calls of the three angels who are now going to blow their bugles!"

The Fifth Bugler Brings the First Disaster

9 Then the fifth angel blew his bugle, and I saw a star which had fallen out of the sky onto the earth. God had given this star the key for the Hole which has no bottom.* **2**And so he opened that Hole, and smoke came up out of it. It was "like the smoke from a large furnace",⁺ and this smoke from the Hole made the air black, and the sun was darkened.

3Then some locusts came out of the smoke, and flew down onto the earth,⁺ and they were given the same kind of power that scorpions have here on earth. **4**But God had told them that they could not damage the grass on the earth, nor any plant or tree. The only ones they could attack were those people who do not have God's brand mark on their foreheads. **5**And they were not allowed to kill anyone, but they could torture their victims for five months. And it would be the same kind of pain that a person has when a scorpion stings him. **6**And during those five months

people will be "trying to find a way to die,
but they won't find it".⁺

They will want to die,
but death will run away from them.

7The locusts "looked like horses"⁺ that are all dressed up for a battle, and on their heads they had what looked like gold crowns. Their faces however were like men's faces, **8**while their hair was like women's hair, and their "teeth were like lion's teeth".⁺ **9**They had heavy metal vests that looked like they were made of iron, and the sound of their wings was "like the roar of many horse-drawn chariots"⁺ charging into battle. **10**They also had tails like scorpions' tails, or like the sharp pointed sticks that mule drivers use to make the mules go. And it was their tails that gave them the power

to keep people in pain for the five months. ¹¹The king who rules over them is the angel in charge of the Hole which has no bottom. His name is Abaddon* in Hebrew, or Apollyon* in Greek.

¹²"The first great disaster is over, but remember that there are still two disasters to come."

The Sixth Bugler Brings the Second Disaster

¹³Then the sixth angel blew his bugle, and I heard a single voice coming from the corners of "the gold incense altar",⁺ which was in front of God. ¹⁴This voice was talking to the sixth angel, who was holding his bugle, and it was saying, "Untie the four angels who are tied up by the great Euphrates river."

¹⁵So the four angels were set free, since they were all ready for that very hour of that day of that month in that year, waiting to kill a third of all the unbelievers on earth. ¹⁶Their army was all mounted on horses, and I was told that it numbered 200 million soldiers.

¹⁷And I saw those horses just as plainly as could be, and the soldiers who were riding on them. The riders were wearing heavy metal vests that were orange and blue and yellow. And the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, with fire, smoke and sulphur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁸And a third of all the unbelievers on earth were killed by these three terrible plagues (the fire, smoke and sulphur coming out of the horses' mouths). ¹⁹You see, the power of these horses is in their mouths and in their tails, because their tails are like snakes with heads, which they use to bite people.

²⁰But the rest of the unbelievers, who hadn't been killed by these terrible plagues, didn't change their minds about the things they were doing, or stop doing them. They didn't stop worshiping demons and "idols made of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood, things which can't see or hear or walk".⁺ ²¹And they weren't sorry for their murders, or their use of drugs and dope, or their sexual sins, or their stealing, and they didn't

stop doing these things either.

Another Angel with a Little Book

10 Next I saw another great, strong angel coming down out of the sky. He had a cloud wrapped around him like a robe, and there was a rainbow around his head. His face was like the sun, his legs looked like pillars of fire, ²and in his hand he was holding a little book, which was opened up. When he came down, he placed his right foot on the ocean and his left one on the land. ³And then he yelled at the top of his voice, which sounded like a lion roaring. And when he yelled, the seven thunders roared back. ⁴And I was going to write down what they said, when I heard a voice coming out of the sky saying, "You mustn't tell anyone what the seven thunders said, and you mustn't write it down!"⁺

⁵Then the angel I saw standing on the ocean and the land

⁶ "raised his right hand up in the air
and swore an oath by the One who is living
forever"⁺ and ever,
the One who created the heavens and everything
in them,
and the earth, and everything on it,
and the ocean, and everything in it.⁺

And then he said, "The time is up! ⁷And the seventh angel is going to blow his bugle soon. And when that bugle sounds, God's secret plan will be completed, just as He said it would when He made His Good News known through His slaves, the prophets."

⁸And then the voice I had heard coming out of the sky was talking to me again, "Go to the angel who is standing on the ocean and the land and take the open book which is in his hand!"

⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little book.

And he said to me, "Take it and eat it! It will be as sweet as honey in your mouth,"⁺ but it will make

you sick to your stomach."

¹⁰So I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it. And it was as sweet as honey in my mouth; but when I had eaten it, I got sick to my stomach.

¹¹Then a voice said to me, "You must speak God's message again about the many races, nations, languages and kings!"

The Two Witnesses

11 Then someone gave me "a cane stick" that was like a yardstick, and said to me, "Go and measure⁺ God's Temple and the incense altar, and count the people who are worshiping there. ²But leave out the outer yard around the Temple, and don't measure it, because it has been given to the people of the other nations, and they will trample on the holy city⁺ for forty-two months.*

³But I will give My message to My two witnesses, and they will speak My Word for those twelve hundred and sixty days, dressed in mourning clothes. ⁴These two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands which are standing in front of the Lord of the earth.⁺ ⁵And if anyone tries to do them any harm, fire will come out of their mouths and destroy their enemies.⁺ Yes, if anyone should ever want to do them any harm, this is how he will be killed.

⁶These witnesses have the authority to shut the doors of heaven, so that no rain will fall during the time they are speaking God's Word.⁺ And they also have the authority to turn the lakes and rivers into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague or disaster as often as they want.⁺

⁷And when they finish telling people what they know about God and His Word, the wild animal* which will be coming up out of the hole which has no bottom will fight with them and overpower them⁺ and kill them. ⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city where their Lord was put on the cross. The spiritual name of that city is "Sodom" or "Egypt".

9And people of all races, tribes, languages and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and they won't let their dead bodies be buried. **10**And the people living on the earth will be filled with joy over their death. They will celebrate and send each other presents, because these two prophets made life miserable for the people living on the earth.

11"But after the three and a half days God 'will fill them with the breath of life, and they will get up and stand on their feet'.⁺ And all those who see them will be filled with great fear.

12"Then the two witnesses will hear a loud voice coming out of the sky. 'Come up here!' the voice will say. And so they will go 'up into heaven'⁺ in a cloud while their enemies watch. **13**And at that same time there will be a great earthquake which will destroy a tenth of the city and kill seven thousand people. And the rest of the people will be terribly afraid and give glory and honor to the God of heaven.

14"The second great disaster is over, but remember that the third one is coming soon!"

The Seventh Angel Blows His Bugle

15Then the seventh angel blew his bugle, and there were loud voices in heaven saying,

"The government of the world is in the hands
of our Lord and His anointed One;
and 'He will rule forever and ever!'"⁺

16And then the twenty-four older men, who were sitting on their thrones in front of God, fell down with their foreheads on the ground and worshiped God, **17**saying,

"We thank You, Lord, our almighty God,
the one who is and who was,
because You have taken Your great power
and have begun to rule as the King.

18 'The people of the other nations have become
angry;⁺
and the time for Your holy anger has come.

Yes, the time has come to judge the dead,
and to give the wages they have earned
to Your slaves, the prophets, and Your people,
and 'those who fear You, great and small',⁺
and also to destroy
those people who are destroying the earth"!

19Then the curtains of God's Temple in heaven were thrown open, and I saw God's agreement box* inside His Temple. And there were flashes of lightning, loud voices, crashes of thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 Then I saw a very strange sight in the sky, which is a picture of something very important. It was a woman* who had the sun wrapped around her like a robe, and the moon under her feet, and on her head she had a crown of twelve stars. **2**She was also going to have a child, and she was screaming as she suffered the first labor pains and then the pains of childbirth.

3And after this I saw another strange sight in the sky, which is also a picture of something important. Just as plain as could be there was a gigantic red dragon, which had seven heads and ten horns,⁺ and on his heads were seven crowns.* **4**His tail was dragging along a third of "the stars in the sky, and he threw them down upon the earth".⁺ And then this dragon was standing right in front of the woman who was beginning to give birth to her child, so that he could eat the child up as soon as it was born.*

5Then the woman "gave birth to a son",* the male child who is going to "rule over all the nations with an iron rod".⁺ And at once the child was snatched up and carried away to God, and to His throne. **6**And then the woman ran away into the desert, to the place which God had already prepared for her, where His angels would take care of her for twelve hundred and sixty days.*

The War in Heaven

⁷And then a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels were fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but they weren't strong enough to win, and so they weren't allowed to live in heaven any longer. ⁹And that was how that great dragon, the old Reptile,* who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who fools the whole world and leads it astray, "was thrown down to the earth",[†] and all his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰And then I heard a loud voice in the sky saying,
 "Now our God has saved the world,
 and has shown His power and set up His Kingdom.
 And His anointed One has shown His authority,
 because the accuser* of our brothers and sisters
 who was accusing them before our God day and
 night,
 has been thrown out of heaven.

¹¹ Our brothers and sisters have defeated him by
 the power of the Lamb's blood,
 and by telling others what they know about Him.
 And they didn't try to save their lives
 when they were facing death.

¹² And therefore the heavens must be filled with joy,
 and everybody who lives there!
 But the earth and the ocean are going to suffer
 terribly,
 because the devil has come down to you.
 And he is terribly angry,
 because he knows that he has only a little time
 left."

The Dragon Attacks the Woman

¹³But when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he chased the woman who had given birth to the little boy, intending to kill her. ¹⁴But God gave the woman the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly to her place in the desert, where she would be taken care of for "a time, (two) times,

and half a time".*

¹⁵Then the dragon spit water out of his mouth which ran after the woman like a river, hoping that she would be carried away by the water and drowned. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman when it opened its mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon had spit out of his mouth.

¹⁷And this made the dragon so angry with the woman that he went off to make war on the rest of her children, who were keeping God's commandments and holding fast to the things Jesus told us. ¹⁸So the dragon went to the sandy shore of the ocean and stood there.

The Two Wild Animals

¹³Then I saw a wild animal "coming up out of the ocean".⁺ It had ten horns and seven heads. And on his ten horns were ten crowns,* and on each of his heads there was a name which was insulting to God. ²This animal looked like a leopard, but it had feet like a bear, and a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave this animal his own power and his throne, and great authority.

³And one of the animal's heads looked like it had been badly wounded and killed, but the wound, which looked like it would kill him, had been healed. And the whole world was so astonished at this that they were following along behind the animal. ⁴Then they all fell down with their foreheads on the ground and worshiped the dragon, because he had given this wild animal his authority. They also worshiped the animal. "Who is like this wild animal?" they said. "And who is able to fight against him?"

⁵Then the dragon gave this wild animal the power to "speak great things about itself"⁺ and insulting things about others. And he was allowed to use his authority for forty-two months.* ⁶And so the animal used his mouth to say false and insulting things about God,⁺ and about God's name and God's house, which is God's people who are living in heaven.

⁷The dragon also gave the wild animal the power to make war against God's people and defeat them, and authority over every tribe, race, language and nation, ⁸so that all the people who live on this earth will worship him ("all" meaning all those whose names were not "written down" at the time the world was created "in the Book of Life",⁺ which belongs to the Lamb who was sacrificed).

⁹Now think about this -

¹⁰ "If a person is meant to be a slave,
he will go into slavery.

If a person is meant to be killed with the sword,
he will be killed with the sword".⁺

This requires God's people to have faith and the ability to hang on to it patiently through all their troubles.

¹¹Then I saw another wild animal coming up out of the earth. This one had two horns, like a lamb, but it was talking like a dragon. ¹²And it was doing things in front of the first wild animal which showed that it had all the authority of the first animal. It was making the earth and the people living on it worship the first wild animal, whose death wound had been healed. ¹³It was also working great miracles,⁺ even making fire come down onto the earth out of heaven while the people were watching. ¹⁴And it was fooling the people who were living on the earth and leading them astray by these miracles it had been given the power to work in front of the first wild animal. And as it did these miracles, it kept telling the people who were living on the earth to make an image in honor of the first wild animal, who had been wounded by the sword, but not killed.

¹⁵Then this second wild animal was given the power to breathe life into the image of the first wild animal, so that the image of the animal could even speak and put to death those who wouldn't worship it.⁺ ¹⁶And it forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, slaves and freemen, to be branded with a special mark on their right hands or their foreheads. ¹⁷And no

one could buy or sell anything unless he had this mark, which was either the name of the animal or its number.*

18This requires wisdom. The intelligent person must figure out this animal's number. You see, it's man's number, which is 666.*

The Lamb and the People of His Kingdom

14 Then just as plain as could be I saw the Lamb standing on Mt. Zion, and with Him there were a hundred and forty-four thousand people who had His name and His Father's name written on their foreheads.*

2And I heard a sound coming out of the sky that sounded "like the roar of many waterfalls"⁺ or a great clap of thunder. But then it was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. **3**And they were singing a new song,⁺ standing there in front of the throne, and in front of the four all-seeing animals and the older men. But nobody could learn to sing this song except the hundred and forty-four thousand people who had been bought back and set free from this world. **4**These are the people who have never done anything to make themselves sexually unclean, because they are virgins. And these are the people who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They have been bought back and set free from the world of men as those who belong completely to God and to the Lamb. **5**"No one has ever heard them tell a lie".⁺ They are spotlessly clean.

The Three Angels

6Then I saw another angel flying through the air. He had an eternal message of Good News to bring to the people living on the earth, to every nation, tribe, language and race. **7**He was shouting at the top of his voice, "You must fear God, and give Him glory and honor, because the time has come for Him to judge the world! You must fall on your knees with your foreheads on the ground and worship 'the One who made the heavens, the earth, the ocean, and the springs of water'!"⁺

8Then a second angel followed along behind the first one, saying, "She has fallen! The great city of Babylon has fallen,⁺ the prostitute who made all the nations of the world drink the 'wine' which drives men mad for her sexual company".⁺

9And then a third angel followed along behind the first two, shouting at the top of his voice, "If a person worships the wild animal and its image, and lets them put that animal's brand mark on his forehead or hand,
10he will also 'drink the "wine" of God's anger',⁺ which has been poured full strength into the cup which contains God's holy anger. And all those who worship the wild animal or its image will be tortured by 'fire and sulphur'⁺ in front of the holy angels and the Lamb.
11And 'the smoke from their torture will keep on going up forever and ever',⁺ and their torture will never stop, day or night. This is what will happen also to the person who lets himself be branded with the animal's name."

12This means that God's people, who keep His commandments, must patiently hold on to their faith in Jesus through all their troubles.

13And then I heard a voice coming out of the sky. "Write this down!" it said. "From now on the truly happy people are the dead who die believing in the Lord!"

"Yes," said the Spirit, "because they will rest from their hard work, and the results of what they have done will go with them."

The Final Judgment

14And then just as plain as could be I saw a white cloud, "and someone sitting on this cloud who looked like the Son of Man".⁺ He had a gold crown on his head,⁺ and a sharp sickle in his hand.*

15And then another angel came out of the Temple, yelling at the top of his voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, " 'Swing your sharp sickle and cut the grain, because the grain in the fields is ripe',⁺ and

the time has come to gather it in!"

16So the one sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the whole earth, and the harvest was gathered in.

17After this another angel came out of the Temple in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle.

18And right behind him was another angel coming out from the incense altar. This one was in charge of the fire on the incense altar, and he shouted at the top of his voice to the angel who had the sharp sickle, "Swing your sharp sickle and gather in the bunches of grapes from the earth's vines, because the grapes are ripe!"

19And so the angel lowered his sickle down to the ground and gathered in the grapes from the earth's vines, and threw them into the great winepress⁺ of God's hot anger, **20**which was outside the city. Then they tramped around on the grapes to squeeze the juice out, and out of the winepress came a stream of blood which ran as high as the horses' bridles for sixteen hundred long city blocks.*

The Seven Angels With The Seven Last Plagues

15 Then I saw another great and astonishing sight in the sky, which is a picture of something very important. There were seven angels holding "the seven last plagues",⁺ because God's hot anger will come to an end with these plagues.

2And then I saw what looked like a glass lake that was filled with fire. And standing on the shore of this glass lake were the people who had won the victory in their fight against the wild animal and his image, and the animal whose name is his number.* They were holding harps which God had given them. **3**And they were singing the song that was written by God's slave Moses,⁺ and a song about the Lamb -

"O Lord, our almighty God,

'the things You do are great and astonishing'.⁺

'O King of the nations',⁺

'the roads You have built are right'⁺and true.
4 'Who is there who is not afraid of You, O Lord,
and will not give You glory and honor?'⁺
because you alone are holy.
'And the people of all the nations will come
and fall down in front of You with their foreheads
on the ground',⁺
because everyone can see the right things You do."

5After this I saw that the front curtains of the Temple
in heaven, where God speaks with men, were thrown
open. 6And then the seven angels who were holding
the seven plagues came out of the Temple. They were
dressed in linen robes that were so clean they were
shining, and they were wearing gold belts around their
waists.

7Then one of the four all-seeing animals gave the
seven angels seven gold bowls, which were filled with
the hot anger of God, who lives forever and ever. 8And
"the Temple was filled with smoke from God's shining
heavenly beauty and power",⁺ and no one could go
into the Temple until the seven plagues of the seven
angels were finished.

The Seven Angels Pour out Their Bowls

16 Then I heard a loud voice coming "out of the
Temple",⁺ talking to the seven angels. "Go!" it
said, "and pour out the seven bowls 'of God's hot anger'⁺
onto the earth!"

2So the first angel went off and poured out his bowl
on the earth. And when he did this, the people who
had the brand mark of the wild animal and were worship-
ing his image were suddenly covered with terrible,
painful sores.⁺

3Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the
ocean, and at once the ocean turned to blood,⁺ like
the blood of a dead person; and every living creature
in the ocean died.

4Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the
rivers and the springs of water, and they also turned

to blood.⁺

5 And then I heard the angel who was in charge of the waters saying,

"You are 'the one who is' and who was,
the Holy One.

And the fact that you have decided to do these
things

shows that 'You always do what is right'.⁺

6 Because 'these people have poured out the blood'⁺
of God's people and His prophets,

You have also given them blood to drink.⁺

And they are getting just what they deserve."

7 And then I heard a voice coming from the incense altar, saying,

"Yes, Lord, our almighty God,

'What you decide is always true and right'.⁺

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun; and this gave it the power to burn men and women with its fiery heat. **9** And so the people were burned by the terrific heat; and they said insulting things about God, who has the authority over such plagues. But they didn't change their minds and their way of living, so as to give God any glory and honor.

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the wild animal, and suddenly his kingdom was in total darkness,⁺ and the people were biting their tongues because they were in such pain. **11** They were also saying insulting things about the God of heaven, because of their sufferings and their sores. But they didn't change their minds and their way of living so as to turn away from the things they had been doing.

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great Euphrates river; and the river dried up to make a road for the kings who were coming from the east.⁺

13 And then I saw three filthy things that looked like frogs coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the wild animal and the false prophet.* **14** They were

the spirits of demons who were working miracles. And they went out to gather together the kings from all over the whole world for the battle which is going to be fought on the great Day* of our almighty God, who has said, **15**"Remember this! I'm going to come like a thief. And the truly happy person will be the one who stays awake⁺ and keeps his clothes on, so that he won't have to walk around naked and have other people see him naked."

16And so the three spirits gathered all the kings together in the place which is called Harmageddon* in Hebrew.

17Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came from the throne 'out of the Temple',⁺ saying, "The end has come!"

18And then there were flashes of lightning, the sound of voices, and crashes of thunder,⁺ followed by a gigantic earthquake, so great that there has never been another one like it since man was created. **19**It split the great city into three parts, and the cities of the other nations were destroyed, as God remembered the great city of Babylon and gave her "the cup that was filled with the 'wine' of His hot and holy anger".⁺ **20**And in this earthquake every island disappeared, and the mountains suddenly weren't there any longer. **21**And gigantic hailstones weighing as much as a hundred thirty pounds* were raining down out of the sky on the people below. And those people were saying insulting things about God, because of the plague of hail, because it was such an exceedingly great plague.

The Destruction of the Antichristian Power

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came to me and said, "Come, and I'll show you how the great prostitute who is sitting on many rivers is going to be punished. **2**The kings of the earth have been her lovers, and people all over the world have gotten drunk by drinking the 'wine' of her prostitution".⁺

³Then the angel took me out into a desert, and it was just as though I had been taken into a different world where I was seeing and hearing only spiritual things.* And there in the desert I saw a woman sitting on a wild animal which was all red and covered with names which are insulting to God.* The animal had seven heads and ten horns, ⁴and the woman was dressed in purple and red robes, and was covered with gold jewelry and expensive stones and pearls.⁺ In her hand she had a gold cup which was filled with things that were so filthy and disgusting that one doesn't even talk about them, and all the filthy things that had to do with her prostitution. ⁵And on her forehead there was a name written, which has a secret meaning - 'The Great Babylon, mother of all prostitutes, and all the filthy, disgusting things on this earth.' ⁶And I saw that the woman was drunk from drinking the blood of God's people, and the blood of those who had been telling others about Jesus. And when I saw this woman, I was completely astonished.

⁷Then the angel said to me, "Why are you so astonished? I'm here to tell you the secret about this woman and the animal she's riding, which has seven heads and ten horns. ⁸The wild animal you saw was alive once, but it isn't now. But it's going to come up out of the Hole which has no bottom,* and then it will be destroyed. And the people on earth whose names have not been written in the Book of Life since the world was created will be astonished when they see this animal, which was alive, but isn't now, and is going to come back again.

⁹What you're seeing requires a mind filled with wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is sitting. They are also seven kings. ¹⁰Five of them have fallen, one is still ruling, and the other hasn't come yet. And when he comes, he can't rule for more than a very little while. ¹¹And the wild animal who once was living, but isn't now, is the eighth king. He's one of the seven kings, and is going to be destroyed.

12"And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings⁺ who have never yet ruled over a kingdom. But they will be given authority to rule as kings for one hour, along with the wild animal. 13These ten kings will all think and act like one man, and they will give their power and authority to the wild animal, 14and they will all fight against the Lamb. But the Lamb will defeat them, because He is 'the Lord of lords, and the King of kings'.⁺ And His faithful followers, the people he has chosen and called, will be with Him.

15Then the angel said to me, "All the rivers you saw where the prostitute was sitting are the races, the tribes of people, the nations and languages. 16And those ten horns you saw, and the wild animal will all hate the prostitute, and they will take away everything she has and leave her naked. And then they will eat her flesh 'and burn up her body with fire'.⁺ 17You see, God has guided their thoughts to do what He wants done, and to think and act as one man, and give their kingdom to the wild animal, until everything God has said has come true.

18"And the woman you saw is the great city which rules over all the kings of the earth".

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down out of the sky. He had great authority, and the earth was all lit up by his shining heavenly beauty, 2and he was yelling in a great, loud voice,

"She has fallen! 'The great city of Babylon has fallen!'⁺

She has become the home of demons,
the prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 She has fallen because she made all the nations of the world
drink the 'wine' which drives men mad for her sexual company.⁺

The kings of the earth have lain in her bed,
and the merchants of the world have become

rich from the powerful appeal of her
fleshly pleasures."

4 Then I heard another voice coming out of the sky,
saying,

"My people, you must get out of this city,⁺
so that you won't become her partners in her sins,
and share her punishment,

5 because her sins are piled up as high as heaven
itself,

and God has remembered her crimes.

6 'Give her back just what she has given others'.⁺
Yes, do what she did, and double the double
portion.⁺

Mix up a double portion for her
in the cup she has mixed for others.

7 Give her a matching amount of suffering
and grief
for all the things she did to bring glory
and honor to herself,
and all the fleshly pleasures she craved.

'She is saying to herself,
"I'm sitting here as a queen.

I am no widow;

I will never have any grief."

8 Therefore her punishments will all come in just
one day'⁺-
death, grief and famine.

'And she will be burned to ashes in the fire',⁺
because the Lord God, who judges her,
is a mighty God.

9 "And the kings of the earth, who visited her bed
and lived only for her fleshly pleasures, will cry and
sob and pound their chests in grief because of what
happened to her,⁺ when they see the smoke from the
fire which is burning her up. 10 They will stand a long
way off, frightened by the sight of her torture, and
say,

'How awful!
How awful for the great city,

that powerful city of Babylon,
because in just one hour your punishment has come!"

11"And the merchants of the world are crying and sobbing and feeling sad when they think of her,⁺ because no one is buying the things they have to sell any longer, 12their imported gold and silver, their expensive stones and pearls, their fine linen, purple cloth, silk and red cloth, and all the pleasant smelling citron wood, and all the things made of ivory and expensive woods, brass, iron and marble, 13their cinnamon and spices, their incense, perfume and sweet smelling oils, their wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, their mules and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves.

14 Yes, the ripe fruits that you wanted so much
are all gone.

All your expensive and beautiful things
have disappeared;
and no one will ever find them again!

15"The merchants who sold these things and got rich from them will stand a long way off, frightened by the sight of her torture, crying and sobbing and overcome with sorrow, 16saying,

'How awful!

How awful it is for that great city,
who was dressed in fine linen cloth,
and purple and red robes,
and was all covered with gold jewelry,⁺
and expensive stones and pearls,

17 because in one hour
all this wealth has been completely destroyed!"⁺

"And every ship captain, everyone sailing anywhere, the sailors and all those who earn their living on the ocean, stood a long way off. 18And as they watched the smoke from the fire which was burning her up, they were yelling, 'What other city is like this great city?'⁺

19"And then they threw dust on their heads, and began to cry and sob and moan with sorrow, saying,

'How awful!

How awful it is for that great city,
 where all those who owned ships which sail
 the ocean
 have become rich from all her expensive things,
 because in one hour she has been completely
 destroyed!'

- 20 But the heavens must be happy and celebrate her
 downfall,⁺
 and God's people and His apostles and
 prophets also,
 because God has punished her fully,
 just as you wanted."

21 And then a great strong angel picked up a stone
 like a huge millstone and threw it into the ocean. And
 as he did so, he said,

"That great city of Babylon
 is going to be thrown down in just such a
 violent way as this,⁺

- and she 'will never be seen again'.⁺
 22 And the sound of harpists and singers,
 flute players and trumpeters,
 will never be heard in you again.

No worker in any trade
 will ever be found in you again.
 'And the sound of the millstone
 will never be heard in you again.

- 23 The light of a lamp
 will never shine in you again.
 The voices of the bridegroom and the bride
 will never be heard in you again'.⁺
 It's true that 'your merchants were the most
 powerful men on earth',⁺
 and all the nations of the world were fooled
 and led astray by your magic arts.

- 24 So Babylon is responsible for the blood of God's
 prophets and people.
 Yes, she is responsible for the blood of all the
 people who have ever been killed here
 on earth".⁺

19 After this I heard what sounded like the loud roar of a big crowd of people up in the sky, saying,

"Praise the Lord!

2 Salvation, glory, honor and power belong to our God, because 'His decisions are always fair and right',⁺ and he has punished the great prostitute who ruined the whole earth with her prostitution. He has made her pay for killing His slaves."

3 And then they shouted again,

"Praise the Lord!

Her smoke will keep on going up forever and ever".⁺

4 And then the twenty-four older men and the four all-seeing animals fell down with their foreheads on the ground before God, who was sitting on His throne, and they worshiped Him, saying, "Yes! They have spoken the truth! Praise the Lord!"

The Wedding Dinner of the Lamb

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying,

" 'Sing praises to our God, all who are His slaves',⁺ and 'all who fear Him, great and small'!"⁺

6 And then I heard what sounded like the roar of a big crowd of people, or "the roar of many waterfalls",⁺ or the sound of mighty crashes of thunder, and they were saying,

"Praise the Lord!

Because the Lord, our almighty God, 'has set Himself up as King'!"⁺

7 We must be happy and shout for joy, and give Him glory and honor, because it's time for the wedding dinner of the Lamb,

and His bride has made herself all ready.

8 She has been given a robe to wear, made of fine linen cloth, shining clean.⁺

Remember that the fine linen
are the good things God's people have done."

9Then an angel said to me, "Write this down - 'The truly happy people are those who are invited to the wedding dinner of the Lamb'!"* And then he added, "These are God's exact words."

10Then I fell down at his feet, with my forehead on the ground to worship him. But he said to me, "See here! Don't do that! I'm God's slave, just like you and your brothers and sisters, who are holding fast to the things Jesus has told us. You must worship God! You see, the things Jesus told us are the living heart and center of everything the prophets have written."

The Rider on the White Horse

11Then I saw the heavens standing wide open;+ and there, just as plain as could be, I saw a white horse. And the man who was riding this horse+ was called "Faithful and True," and when He judges and fights, He always does what is right. **12**"His eyes were like a fiery flame",+ and He had a lot of Persian crowns* on His head. There was also a name written on this man, but He is the only one who knows what it is. **13**He was wearing a long outer cloak which had been dipped in blood,+ and the name that people used when they spoke of Him was "God's Word".* **14**The armies of heaven were following along behind Him, riding on white horses, and dressed in fine, clean, white linen robes. **15**And there was a sharp sword coming out of His mouth+* which He could use to destroy the nations.

This is the one who "will rule the nations with an iron rod",+ and the one who "will stamp around on the grapes in the winepress"+ to make the "wine" of our almighty God's hot and holy anger. **16**And the name that was written on His long outer cloak and on His thigh was "King of kings and Lord of lords".+

The Destruction of the Rider's Enemies

17Then I saw a single angel standing on the sun.

He was yelling at the top of his voice, saying to all the birds that were flying around in the air, " 'Come and gather together at God's great dinner, ¹⁸so that you can eat the dead bodies of kings, generals and great heroes, the dead bodies of horses and their riders'.⁺ Yes, you can eat the flesh of all men and women, slave and free, great and small."

¹⁹And then I saw the wild animal,* and "the kings of the earth" and their armies "all gathered together to make war against the man"⁺ who was riding on the white horse and his army. ²⁰And in the battle the wild animal was captured, and so was the false prophet who had done all the miracles in front of the wild animal, with which he had fooled and led astray the people who had been branded with the wild animal's mark, and the people who had worshiped his image. And then the two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur.⁺ ²¹And all the kings and their soldiers were killed by the sword that was coming out of the mouth of the man who was riding the horse. And all the birds filled their bellies with the flesh from their dead bodies.

The Dragon is Captured and Chained

²⁰Then I saw an angel coming down out of the sky, holding in his hand a huge chain and the key for the Hole which has no bottom.* ²And he grabbed the dragon, that old Reptile, who is really the devil or Satan, and tied him up for a thousand years. ³Then he threw him into the Hole which has no bottom and locked the door and put a seal on it, so that he couldn't fool the nations any longer and lead them astray until the thousand years have come to an end. After that he must be set free for a little while.

⁴Next I saw some thrones with people sitting on them who had been appointed to serve as judges. And I also saw the souls of those people whose heads had been chopped off because they believed God's Word and the things Jesus told us. These people hadn't worshiped the wild animal or his image, and they hadn't

let themselves be branded with the animal's mark on their foreheads or hands. And these people came back to Life and ruled with the Anointed One as kings for a thousand years. ^{5b}The resurrection of these people is the first resurrection.* ⁶And the person who has a part in this first resurrection is a truly happy person and is perfectly holy. So the second death* has no power over such people. And "they will be priests of God"⁺ and His Anointed One, and they will rule with Him as kings for that thousand years. ^{5a}But the rest of the dead didn't come back to life again until the thousand years had come to an end.

The Defeat and Punishment of Satan

⁷But when the thousand years come to an end, Satan will be untied and set free from his prison. ⁸And then he will go out to fool the nations and lead them astray in all "the four corners of the earth",⁺ Gog and Magog,* and gather them all together for the battle. And the size of his army will be like the sand on the seashore.

⁹Then this great army will spread out over the whole surface of the earth and surround the camp of God's people, and the city which He loves.⁺ But then fire will come down out of the sky and completely destroy them.⁺ ¹⁰And the devil, who has fooled them all and led them astray, will be thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur, where the wild animal and the false prophet are.* And they will be tortured day and night forever and ever.

The Final Judgment

¹¹Then I saw a large white throne, with someone sitting on it.* And then the heavens and the earth disappeared right before His eyes, and they were never seen again.*

¹²Then I saw all the dead, great and small, standing there in front of the throne⁺ while "the books were opened".⁺ And then another book was opened, which was "the book of Life",⁺ and the dead were judged according to what was written in these books about

the things they had done.⁺ **13**And in this raising of the dead back to life the ocean gave up all the dead who had been buried there, and death and the grave* gave up all the dead who were buried there; and each person was judged according to the things he or she had done.

14And then death and the grave were thrown into the fiery lake. And this fiery lake is the second death. **15**And if a person's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into this fiery lake.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.⁺ You see, the first heaven and earth had disappeared,* and so there was no longer any ocean.

2And then I saw the holy city,⁺ the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of the sky, dressed up like a bride who is wearing her prettiest clothes and jewelry for her husband.⁺

3And I heard a loud voice coming from the throne, saying, " 'Now hear this! God is now making His home' with men and women. 'And He will live with them, and they will be His people'.⁺ Yes, He will be with them as their God. **4**And He will wipe away every tear'⁺ from their eyes, for there will no longer be any death, and no grief or crying or pain any more,⁺ because the first world has disappeared."

5Then the one who was sitting on the throne said, "Now hear this! I'm making everything new".⁺ And after this He said, "Write this down, because what I'm telling you is true, and you can believe it."

6And then He said to me, "The end has come! I am the 'A' and the 'Z', the beginning and the end. I will give the person who is thirsty a free drink from the spring⁺ where the Water of Life⁺ is flowing. **7**Yes, the person who wins the victory will have this privilege, because this is what I have set aside to give to My children. And 'I will be his God, and he will be My child'.⁺

8"But it will be different for the cowards and unbelievers, and the people who have polluted themselves by all kinds of filthy and disgusting sins, the murderers, the drug addicts, the idolators, and all liars. Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur, which is the second death."

The New Jerusalem

9Then one of the seven angels who have the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came down and started to talk to me. "Come with me," he said, "and I'll show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

10And then it was just as though I had been taken into a different world, where I was seeing and hearing only spiritual things, because "he took me up onto a big high mountain"⁺ and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of the sky. **11**It was glowing with God's shining heavenly beauty, and flashing and sparkling like a crystal clear diamond, the most expensive stone of all.

12It had a big high wall which had twelve gates. And there were twelve angels at the gates, and on the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of the people of Israel. **13**There were three gates on the east side, three on the north side, three on the south side, and three on the west side.⁺ **14**And the city wall had twelve foundation stones, with the names of the Lamb's twelve apostles written on these stones.⁺

15The angel who was talking to me also had a gold measuring stick in his hand, so that he could measure the city and its gates and wall.* **16**The city was laid out as a square, its length being the same as its width. And when he measured the city with his stick, it was twelve thousand long city blocks* each way, the length, width and height all being equal. **17**And when he measured the city wall, it was a hundred forty-four cubits high,* since he was using the same standard of measurement that we human beings use.

18The wall was made of diamond, and the city was made of pure gold, like clear glass. **19**And the foundation stones of the wall were decorated with every kind of precious stone.⁺ The first one was covered with diamonds, the second one with sapphires, the third with agates, the fourth with emeralds, **20**the fifth with onyxes, the sixth with carnelians, the seventh with chrysolites, the eighth with beryls, the ninth with topazes, the tenth with green hornstones, the eleventh with zircons, and the twelfth with amethysts. **21**And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, and each one of them was made from a single pearl. And the main street of the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

22I didn't see any temple in the city, because the Lord, our almighty God, and the Lamb are its Temple. **23**And the city doesn't need the sun or moon to give it light, because God's shining heavenly beauty lights it all up,⁺ and the Lamb is its lamp.⁺ **24**And the people of all nations will live by its light.⁺

The kings of the earth will bring their treasures into this city, **25**and its gates will never be closed at any time of day,⁺ because there won't be any night there.⁺ **26**And the people of all nations will bring their treasures and riches into the city.

27But nothing that is "unclean" will ever get into that city,⁺ nor anyone who does filthy, disgusting things or tells lies. The only ones who will get in will be those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.⁺

22 Then the angel showed me the river of Living Water⁺ that was sparkling like crystal. It was coming out of God's throne and the Lamb's throne. **2**And in between the river and the main street of the city was the Tree of Life,⁺ which produces twelve kinds of fruit, one crop of fruit each month. And the leaves of this tree are used by the people of all nations for healing.⁺

3Nothing that God has marked to be destroyed will be there in the city any longer. But God's throne and

the Lamb's throne will be there, and His slaves will worship and serve Him. ⁴Yes, they will see His face,⁺ and His name will be written on their foreheads.⁺ ⁵And there will be no night any more, and they won't need any lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord our God will give them His light;⁺ and they will rule as kings forever and ever.⁺

Jesus' Second Coming

⁶Then the angel said to me, "What I'm going to tell you is true, and you can believe it, and the Lord, who controls the minds and thoughts of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His slaves the things which are going to happen very soon.⁺ ⁷'Listen!' says the Lord, 'I'm coming soon! The truly happy person is the one who believes God's words which are written in this book and does what they tell him to do!'"

⁸My name is John, and I'm the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down with my forehead on the ground in front of the angel who had shown me all this.

⁹But he said to me, "See here! Don't do that! I'm God's slave, just like you and your brothers the prophets, and those who believe and do the things that are in this book. You must worship God!" ¹⁰And then he added, "Don't roll up this book* and put a seal on it, because the time is almost here.

¹¹ The person who is doing wrong
 will have to keep on doing wrong;
 the person who is filthy
 will have to keep on being filthy;
 the person who is doing what is right
 will have to keep on doing what is right;
 and the person who is clean and holy
 will have to keep on being clean and holy."

¹²But Jesus' voice said, "Listen! I'm coming soon! And I will bring My rewards with Me,⁺ so that I can pay back every person according to what he has done.

¹³I am the 'A' and the 'Z', the first and the last, the

beginning and the end. **14**And the truly happy people are those who are washing their robes clean,* so that they will be allowed to eat the fruit from the Tree of Life⁺ and go through the gates into the City. **15**Outside the city are the dogs,* the drug addicts, the murderers, the people who worship idols, and everyone who loves lies and tells lies.

16"I (Jesus) have sent My angel to give you this message to give to the churches. I am the sprout from David's root,⁺ his Descendant. I am the bright Morning star.⁺

17"And now My Spirit and My bride are both saying, 'Come!' And the person who hears this must also say, 'Come!' And the person who is thirsty must come. And whoever wants it must take the Living Water, and it won't cost him a thing.⁺

18"And I'm giving this warning to everyone who hears these words of God which are written in this book. If a person adds anything to these words, God will add to that person's life the plagues which are described in this book. **19**And if a person takes away any of God's words which are written in this book,⁺ God will take away that person's share of the Tree of Life and the holy city, which are described in this book.

20"And now the one who is telling you all this says, 'Yes, I'm coming soon!'"

And I answered, "Yes, indeed! Come, Lord Jesus!"

21And I pray that you will all continue to enjoy the undeserved love of our Lord Jesus!

SOME HELPFUL NOTES FOR THE READER

Matthew

Title Matthew was one of Jesus' apostles (see chapter 10:2-4), and he wrote his gospel for the Jews, to prove to them that Jesus is their Savior. See also the next note.

1:1 The Messiah was the Savior promised first in Genesis 3:15, and written about all through the Old Testament. Messiah means "The Anointed One", because He would be anointed as their Prophet, Head Priest and King (for more on anointing, see picture and note at Acts 4:27c). Messiah is a Hebrew word. The Greeks translated it as Christos, which was then shortened in English to Christ. It was used first as a title - Jesus, the Christ.

1:18 See the note above.

1:21 Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name Joshua, which means "Jehovah (God) saves".

2:1a Since Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth, Galilee, Luke explains why Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Judea (Luke 2:1-4). See the map opposite page 1 for these two towns.

b This Herod was called Herod the Great. He was appointed "king" of the ancient kingdom of Israel by the Roman government in 37 B.C. He was terribly jealous and suspicious of anyone who might take away his kingdom. He died in 4 B.C., as you will see later.

c Magoi was a Persian word which meant "wise men". They lived in Media and Persia, and were educated in all subjects - mathematics, astronomy, art, and the literature and religion of all nations. In Jesus' day Persia was called Parthia (see map on page 332).

2:2 This refers to the "Star of Jacob" prophecy

spoken by Balaam in Numbers 24:17. The magoi had studied the Hebrew Bible and the prophecies of the Messiah, and believed these prophecies.

- 2:4a "Scribes" means "writers". Before the invention of printing in 1453, all books had to be copied by hand, letter by letter, and this work was done by the scribes. But since most of the Jews in that day couldn't read, the only books they had were the Bibles kept in the meeting houses. And so the work of making new copies of the Bible when the old ones wore out was the work of the priests, who were Levites, and were trained to read and write. Because they were educated, this group of men were looked upon as some of the leading citizens of the community, and acted as the school teachers for the children. They also wrote and read letters for the people, especially the richer people who were in business or wanted to have a book. In Jesus' day most all scribes were priests and members of the Sadducee party (see note at 3:7b), and were the political leaders of the nation, since they worked with the Roman government. But in Jesus' day some of the Pharisees (see note at 3:7a) were also scribes who had been taught to read and write by the rabbis. It is also possible that some of the Levite scribes had studied under the rabbis (see note at 8:19b).

b See note at 1:1.

- 2:11a The way to show respect for someone in those days was to get down on your hands and knees in front of that person, and put your forehead on the ground (see picture), just as a dog does when he creeps up before his master, expecting to be punished. And the word used by the Greeks for this meant "to act like a

dog in front of . . ." The people did this when they were near the king or the governors, or any official. Slaves did this when they talked to their masters, and the common people did this to show their respect for the higher classes or rich people.

2:11b Myrrh was a very expensive perfume. See note at Mark 15:23.

2:15 Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., so the birth of Jesus must have been around 6 B.C. instead of zero. The reason for this is that the early calendars had 12 months of 30 days each, so that the years were about 5-6 days short. By the time this was noticed and corrected, there was about a 6-year "shortage", and the only way to correct this was to move all the earlier dates backwards.

2:23a This is where Mary and Joseph had lived before Jesus was born (Luke 2:4).

b Nazorite may be a reference to Judges 13:5-7. where Samson the Nazirite is a picture of Jesus. Or it may refer to Isaiah 11:1, where Jesus is called "the Branch" (Hebrew, netzer) from the same root as Nazareth. Or it may refer to Psalm 65:6, where netzar means "clothed with power". But it seems clear that the people in Jesus' day thought it meant "from Nazareth."

3:1a When Mary and Joseph moved back to Nazareth, it was about 4 or 3 B.C. But John began his work in 26 A.D. (see Luke 3:1). All we know about Jesus in these 30 years is what Luke tells us in Luke 2:39-52.

b This desert was the southern part of Judea, as one went west from the Dead Sea - the Hill Country. The Dead Sea is 1,300 feet below sea level, and much of the hill country is also below sea level, and is very hot and dry. See map of Israel opposite page 1.

- 3:4 Locusts are very large grasshoppers which were eaten in those days.
- 3:7a The Pharisees were a very religious group of people. The name means "the separated ones", and they took this name because they would not adopt the Greek and Roman customs of the day, as many of the other Israelites did. They spent their time studying and trying to keep God's Law, and also the laws and rules in the "Tradition of the Elders" (rabbis) (see note at 15:2). Their aim was to keep every law and rule perfectly. In time, however, their good intentions turned all this into a system of trying to save themselves by their own good works. It also made them very proud of their religiousness, and they looked down on everyone else as "unclean" (see Luke 18:9-12). They hated Jesus because He refused to obey the rules in their book of Tradition.
- b The Sadducees were a small but very powerful group of the most important priests and scribes, and perhaps all the priests and Levites considered themselves to be Sadducees. Since the priests were in charge of the Temple, they claimed to be the religious leaders of Israel, but they weren't religious people at all. And they hated the Pharisees, who had become the religious leaders of the people. The Sadducees had become very rich, since they collected all the religious taxes, and part of the profits of the temple merchants (see 21:12-13). The Sadducees had also become the political leaders of Israel by working with the Romans, but the people hated them as traitors. Of course they hated Jesus because He was so popular with the people, and they were afraid He would start a revolution and overthrow them as the leaders.

- 3:12 See picture and note at Luke 3:17.
- 4:3 See picture and note at 14:17.
- 4:9 See picture and note at 2:11a.
- 4:12 See Chapter 14:3.
- 4:13 See map on page x, opposite page 1.
- 4:18 See picture and note at Mark 1:16.
- 4:19 The rabbi's students lived with him 24 hours a day, and never left him, except for minor errands. See also note at 8:19b.
- 4:23 The verb used here means to "teach". But among the Jews, the teachers were the rabbis; and the rabbis taught only the Bible (our Old Testament). Not only Jesus' followers, but all the people in Israel treated Jesus as a rabbi. And whenever Jesus was with any group of people, He always acted like a rabbi, and spent His time explaining the Bible to them.
- 4:24 Epilepsy is a condition when a person becomes unconscious and loses control of his or her muscles and rolls around on the ground or floor, making strange sounds. See also Matt. 17:15, Mark 1:26 and Luke 4:35.
- 4:25 See map opposite page 1.
- 5:2 See note at 4:23.
- 5:15 A lamp in Jesus' day looked much like a modern ash tray, with one little lip. The wick was placed on this lip, with one end down in the oil, and they lit the other end, which hung over the lip. The oil was olive oil. They also used lampstands, perhaps something like the one pictured.
- 5:17 Generally the Jews spoke of their Bible (Old Testament) as "the Law and the Prophets". See note at Romans 3:19. Here the "Law" would mean the writings of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament.

- 5:18 Here the "Law" would mean the whole Old Testament.
- 5:20a See note at 2:4.
- b See note at 3:7a.
- 5:22 The Jewish Council, called the Sanhedrin, was made up of 70 of the leading older men of the nation, plus the Head Priest, who was the President. This group was like our Congress and Supreme Court combined. They made the laws and acted as the highest court in the land. Almost all the members were either Pharisees or Sadducees (See Acts 23: 6-8 and Numbers 11:16-25).
- 5:33 An oath is a special promise that one makes in which he asks God to help him do what he promises to do.
- 5:41 Roman law gave a soldier the authority to make anyone carry his pack for one mile.
- 6:16 Going without food (fasting) was an important religious practice of the Pharisees. It was regarded as a "good work" in God's eyes, since they were showing God how bad they felt about their sins. But fasting is not commanded in the Old Testament, and was a practice which the early rabbis started. The laws and rules about fasting were found in the Tradition of the Elders (see note at 15: 6:21 See Luke 12:33-34, 18:22, and 1 Tim. 6:17-19
- 6:32 The people of Israel always called themselves "the Nation", that is, God's chosen nation (see Ex. 19:3-6), and all the other people were "the nations", meaning the other nations, called "gentiles", because they were outsiders or unbelievers. They never realize that most of the Jews, or Israelites were also unbelievers.
- 7:9 See picture and note at 14:17.
- 7:12 See note at Romans 3:19.

7:14a See note at 21:32.

b See Luke 13:23-24.

7:28 See note at 4:23.

7:29 See note at 2:4.

8:2a See picture and note at 2:11a.

b Leprosy was a terrible skin disease which caused the flesh to rot away. Therefore it was thought of as something "unclean". There was also no cure for it.

8:3 This was a daring act of love that no one but Jesus would dare to do, since leprosy was a disease which could be "caught" by touching a person who had it. Therefore all lepers were forced to live by themselves outside of town, and no one came near them.

8:4 When God gave the Law, He told the priests how to recognize leprosy, and also gave them authority to send lepers away to live by themselves. So everyone who had skin problems had to be examined by a priest (see Leviticus 13). And if a leper's skin problems disappeared the priest examined him again, so that he could be declared to be "clean" once more before he was allowed to live with other people again (see Leviticus 14).

8:19a See note at 2:4.

b Rabbi is a Hebrew word which means "the great one," but it came to be the regular word for a teacher. Rabbis were men who had studied the Bible very thoroughly. The younger men were trained by the older rabbis, and their education lasted for as many as 20 years, during which time the teacher lectured to them and examined them every day, all day long, until they had learned everything the older rabbis had taught. Thus they were able to recite much of the Old Testament by heart, and also to explain to the people what the Bible means. They

would be like today's pastors or college professors, and were highly respected by the people. They were the real religious leaders, and almost all of them were Pharisees. See John 1:38b.

- 8:19c Becoming a student of one of the rabbis was a very difficult decision to make, because one had to give up everything else in his life to do so. And since there was so much to learn (see note above), the student had to stay with the rabbi 24 hours a day, wherever he went, since the teaching went on all the time. See also the note at 4:19.
- 8:20 Although Jesus was the promised Savior (Messiah, see note at 1:1), He never used that name when He spoke about Himself, because the people of Israel in His day were looking for a soldier savior to save them from the Romans and set them free. Therefore Jesus always called Himself the Son of Man, which was certainly a reference to the first promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15. There God told Adam and Eve that the Savior would be born of a woman, meaning that He would be a true man, the son of a human mother, and that this Savior would save all men and women from sin. This title was used in Psalm 8:4 and Daniel 7:13-14, but it was not used by the Jews in Jesus' day to speak of the Messiah.
- 8:28 See map opposite page 1.
- 8:34 See note at Mark 5:14.
- 9:2 See picture and note at Mark 2:4.
- 9:3 See note at 2:4.
- 9:6 See note at 8:20.
- 9:9 The Roman Senate set the amount of money to be collected each year from each country and district in the Empire. And then the rich businessmen and families, some of whom

would be like our mafia or crime groups, bought the right to collect the taxes in each city or province. Then they hired the toughest men they could find to do the collecting. The government gave each collector a squad of four soldiers to help in the collecting. The collector then set up his table in the town square or on a busy street, and the soldiers went into the houses and grabbed people on the streets, and the collector would force them to pay whatever he thought he could get, using force, torture and threats to get them to pay. Naturally, everyone hated these tax collectors and the government that used such a system.

9:10 See picture and note at 26:20.

9:11 See note at 3:7a.

9:14 See note at 6:16; but remember that during festivals, weddings, and other joyful occasions, the rules about fasting were suspended.

9:17 See picture and note at Luke 5:37.

9:18 See picture and note at 2:11a.

9:20 See picture and note at Luke 8:44.

9:24 This is the Christian view of death as found all throughout the Bible. And it is the truth since on the last Day Jesus is going to call all the dead back to life and wake them up. See John 5:28-29 and compare Deuteronomy 31:16, which is repeated many times in the Old Testament.

9:34 See note at 3:7a.

9:35a See note at 4:23.

b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

10:2 The word "apostle" means "one who is sent out" to deliver a certain message or do a certain job (see verse 5). Jesus had many followers, but only twelve apostles.

- 10:13 The usual Hebrew greeting was "Peace be to you", or to this house, meaning God's peace. And that meant "May you have nothing to worry about or be afraid of".
- 10:14 This was a Hebrew custom which showed that you didn't want anything more to do with the people or their city forever. You didn't even want any of their dust on your feet.
- 10:18 See note at 6:32.
- 10:23 See note at 8:20.
- 10:25 This was a Hebrew name for Satan, meaning "Lord of filth". See 12:24
- 10:29 See picture and note at Luke 12:6.
- 11:1 See note at 4:23.
- 11:3 See note at 1:1.
- 11:16 In those days there were no stores like we have. Those who had things to sell took them to the town square and set them out. So the square was the place where everybody came to gather during the day to buy, sell, and talk.
- 11:17 This was how the Israelites showed great grief and sorrow.
- 11:19a See note at 8:20.
b See note at 9:9.
- 11:21a See map opposite page 1.
b This was another way a Jew showed that he was suffering great sorrow over his sins.
- 11:23 See map opposite page 1.
- 12:2a See note at 3:7a.
b Saturday was the Jewish Sunday, when everyone was to go to the meeting house to hear the rabbi (teacher) explain the Bible and sing hymns and pray. And like our Sunday, it was to be a day of rest. No work of any kind was to be done (see Luke 23:56).
- 12:2 This was not really against the Law God gave to Moses (Exodus 20:8-10), since the apos-

ties weren't doing any work. But the rabbis said this was work. See note at 15:2.

12:4 See 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

12:5 See Numbers 28:9-10.

12:8 See note at 8:20.

12:9 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

12:14a See note at 3:7a.

b At this time the Pharisees, who were the popular leaders, and the people as a whole, were looking for another King David, a great general who would conquer all their enemies and make them a free nation. And although Jesus was a direct descendant of David, He was not a military savior, but a spiritual Savior, who would save them from the devil, eternal death and their own sins.

12:18 See note at 6:32.

12:24a See note at 3:7a.

b See note at 10:25.

12:37 See note at Romans 1:17b.

12:38a Some of the scribes were also Pharisees. See note at 2:4a.

b See note at 8:19b.

12:42 This was the queen of Sheba, who came to see Solomon. See 1 Kings 10:1-10.

13:12 We still have this same saying, "The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer."

13:23 See Luke 21:1-4.

13:26 The wild wheat plants looked like regular wheat while they were growing, so that they couldn't tell the difference until the heads developed. The difference between wheat and wild wheat, often called "black" wheat, was that the wild wheat was poisonous when eaten.

13:37 See note at 8:20.

13:43 See note at Romans 1:17.

13:52a See note at 2:4.

- b Every home had a little closet or room where they kept their food, clothing and more valuable possessions.

13:54a See note at 4:23.

- b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

13:57 See note at 1:1.

14:1 This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who was "King" of Judea when Jesus was born (see note at 2:1). His title was Tetrarch of Galilee, because he ruled one fourth of his father's kingdom. But because the Roman Emperor appointed him, he was simply the Emperor's Governor there.

14:7 See note at 5:33.

14:13 Luke 9:10 says it was near Bethsaida.

14:17 A "loaf" of bread in Jesus' day looked like a large hamburger bun, about 6-8 inches across, and quite flat. Today it is called Syrian bread. This was a little boy's lunch (John 6:8-9), and it would have given him a couple of lunches during the day. The little fish were dried and smoked.

14:33 See picture and note at 2:11a.

14:34 Gennesaret was a large fertile plain, about 3x4 miles, on the northwestern corner of Lake Galilee. The city of Capernaum was built there, named after an old spring there. In earlier times Lake Galilee was called Gennesaret. See map opposite page 1.

14:36 See picture and note at Luke 8:44.

15:1a See note at 3:7a.

- b See note at 2:4.

15:2 First read the note on the rabbis at 8:19b. Their study of the Bible, which they called "God's Law", certainly goes back at least to the time of Solomon and his Temple in 958 BC.

And as they studied each part of God's Law, they made up dozens and hundreds of new laws and rules, covering every possible situation and act in a person's daily life. All these laws and rules were then gathered together in a lot of books called "The Traditions of the Elders". The word "tradition" means something passed down from father to son. The bad thing is that these new rules and laws became stricter and stricter, until finally almost everything the average person did was a "sin", even though God's Law did not say so.

15:11 See note at Acts 10:14.

15:21 See map opposite page 1.

15:25 See picture and note at 2:11a.

15:34 See picture and note at 14:17.

15:39 The location of Magadan is unknown. It probably was on the west or northwest shore of Lake Galilee. Mark says here that Jesus went to Dalmanutha, which is never mentioned in any other place. (Mark 8:10)

16:1a See note at 3:7a.

b See note at 3:7b.

16:13a Caesaria Philippi was in Syria, Israel's northern neighbor (see map opposite page 1). And the people there were non-Jews and unbelievers. Jesus went there because at that time he didn't want further arguments with the Pharisees and scribes.

b See note at 8:20.

16:16 See note at 1:1.

16:17 See 3:17.

16:18 The name Peter means "a stone".

16:21a See note at 5:22.

b See note on the Sadducees at 3:7b.

c See note at 2:4

- 17:1 This must have been Mt. Hermon (9,000 feet high), just north of Caesarea Philippi (see map opposite page 1).
- 17:5 See Exodus 13:21-22, especially vs 21b, and Exodus 16:10. This was the Shekinah cloud, and it was the sign of God's presence.
- 17:10 See note at 2:4.
- 17:14 See picture and note at 2:11a.
- 17:15 See note at 4:24, and read Luke 4:35.
- 17:20 See 13:32.
- 17:27 A stater was a large Roman coin, same value as a Jewish shekel, worth 4 dinars or drachmas - 4 day's wages. Since the Temple tax was a half shekel (2 dinars) per person, this would pay for both Peter and Jesus.
- 18:17 See note at 9:9. The rules given in the Tradition of the Elders said that a Jew must have nothing to do with any unbeliever or sinful person, and everyone thought that the tax collectors were dishonest.
- 18:24 A talent was a unit of weight, about 50 pounds. So a talent of gold was worth 6,000 dinars or drachmas - 6,000 day's wages, or 16 years of work! And 10,000 talents would be worth 60 million day's wages! That would run into the trillions of dollars today! Even a talent of silver would be worth four million day's wages today.
- 18:26 See picture and note at 2:11a.
- 18:28 See picture and note at 22:19.
- 19:3 See note at 3:7a.
- 19:9 See 5:31-32.
- 19:16 See note at 8:19b.
- 19:21 See note at Matthew 4:19.
- 19:24 Jesus and all the Jews spoke a language called Aramaic, and the word "gamla" meant either a camel or a large rope, just as we

have words which are spelled the same, but have different meanings. And some of the early translators or copyists must have taken the wrong meaning here. For no one would ever talk about a camel going through a needle's eye. But every Jewish house had several large ropes, that were used to tie bundles on the backs of men and animals. And even with the largest 6-inch needles that were used for sewing rugs and tents, it would be impossible to force one of these large ropes through the needle's eye.

19:28 See note at 8:20.

20:2 See picture and note at 22:19.

20:3 See note at 11:16.

20:17 Jesus had been spending the last few weeks or months on the eastern side of the Jordan river, in what was called Perea (see 19:1). Now He had crossed the river and was starting the long climb up to Jerusalem, about 4,500 feet in 18 miles.

20:18a See note on Sadducees at 3:7b.

b See note at 2:4.

20:19 See note at 6:32.

20:20 See picture and note at 2:11a

20:29 See map opposite page 1.

21:1 See map on page 135.

21:2a He was talking about the village of Bethany, which was right down the road from Bethphage on the way to Jerusalem. See Luke 19:29, and also the map opposite page 1.

b This donkey and colt belonged to one of Jesus' friends in Bethany, probably Lazarus.

21:5 A donkey was a gentle animal the peasants and their families rode on and used to carry their small loads. No horses were used for farm work then. They were used only by sol-

diers, and especially by generals, when they were fighting and in the parades after the battles. In this way Jesus made it plain to the people in Jerusalem that He wasn't coming to make war, but to bring peace between God and men and women.

21:18 Verses 12-17, which tell about the cleansing of the Temple, took place on Monday morning, as Mark and Luke make clear. So we must put them following verse 19.

21:12 The word which is translated in all the older versions as the "Temple" is a word which means "the holy place", and it should be translated as the Temple-yard or Temple-grounds. The aerial view of the Templeyard on page 63 will show you that the Temple building was a very small building in the top right center of the grounds. None of the people ever got inside this Temple, and no "services" were ever held there. Only 2 priests entered the Temple each day, one in the morning (see Luke 1:8-10), and one in the evening, to burn the incense. And the Head Priest went into the Holiest Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). So whenever the Bible says that the people went to the Temple, it always means that they went into the Templeyard, to bring their offerings and sacrifices to the priests, and to talk with their friends and sing their prayers at the prayer hours and listen to the rabbis. It was like the town square in the other cities (see note at 11:16).

21:15a See note on Sadducees at 3:7b.

b See note at 2:4.

21:23a See picture and note at 21:12.

b See note at 4:23.

c See note at 5:22.

- 21:31 See picture and note at 9:9.
- 21:32 This was a familiar thought among the Jews, that there were two roads - one leading to Life - the Lord's road, and the other leading to eternal Death - the Devil's road. Jesus referred to these two roads in chapter 7:13-14. See Isaiah 35:8-10.
- 21:42 This is a passage which gives us a picture of the Christian Church, of which Jesus is the cornerstone. See 1 Peter 2:4-5.
- 22:1a See note on Sadducees at 3:7b.
b See note at 3:7a.
- 22:4 A big wedding party like this would last for several days, and the guests, especially those from out of town, were expected to come in the morning for breakfast and stay as many days as the party lasted.
- 22:10 See picture and note at 26:20.
- 22:11 All guests were required to wear a special wedding robe when they attended such a wedding party. If the guest was too poor to buy a robe, the host supplied one. To attend without a wedding robe was a very insulting thing to the host.
- 22:16a See note at 8:19b.
b See note at 21:32.
- 22:19 A dinar was the standard Roman coin. It was worth a day's wages for the average working man. Two hundred dinars would be worth eight month's wages.
- 22:21 See note at Luke 3:1a.
- 22:23 See note at 3:7b.
- 22:32 See note at John 8:24.
- 22:33 See note at 4:23.
- 22:35 See note at 2:4.
- 22:42 See note at 1:1.

- 23:5a The word used here is "phylacteries". They were little boxes which religious Israelites strapped on their foreheads and left arms. Inside were little strips of papyrus (paper) on which they had written Bible verses to remind the wearer that God's Word must govern what we think and do. We could call them memory boxes. See Deuteronomy 6:8.
- b See picture and note at Luke 8:44.
- 23:6a The places of honor at the table were those closest to the host. The highest place was at the host's right, and the second highest at his left. See picture and note at 26:20.
- b The officers of each meeting house were ten older men, elected by the congregation. They had the only chairs, aside from the rabbi's chair. See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 23:7a See note at 11:16.
- b See note at 8:19b.
- 23:10 See note at 1:1.
- 23:12 See Proverbs 3:34.
- 23:25 See note at John 2:6
- 23:27 According to Jewish law, not only foods and people could be "unclean", but also things, like a dead body. In Leviticus 21:11 there was a law that the Head Priest must not touch, or even come close to, a dead body, so that he would not be made "unclean". But the Tradition of the Elders (see note, 15:2) made this commandment apply to every Jew. Then they made it a sin to even touch or go near a grave. And then the Tradition made the Jews whitewash all graves or tombs to keep people from touching them or going near them.
- 23:35a See note at Romans 1:17.
- b 2 Chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew bible. And since Abel was the first murder

victim reported in the Bible, and Zechariah was the last victim reported, Jesus is telling the Pharisees that they will be held responsible for all such murders (vs 36).

24:1 See the picture on page 63.

24:2 This prophecy was fulfilled exactly as Jesus described it in 70 A.D. when the Roman legions completely destroyed Jerusalem after the Jews declared their independence.

24:3 See the map on page 135.

24:5 See note at 1:1.

24:14 See note at 6:32.

24:15a See Daniel 9:27, 11:31 and 12:11.

b The "Holy Place" was the Temple in Jerusalem because it was God's house.

24:20 Over the years the rabbis had added many new laws telling the people what they could not do as "work" on their day of rest (Saturday). One such rule was that a person could not walk more than about .6 mile, about 5 long city blocks, on that day. See note at 12.1b.

24:21 See Daniel 12:1 and Joel 2:2.

24:27 See note at 8:20.

24:31 See Luke 24:51, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, and Revelation 1:7.

25:13 See 24:36.

25:15 See note at 18:24.

25:29 See note at 13:12.

25:37 See note at Romans 1:17.

25:46 Compare this section with James 2:14-26.

26:2a The Passover was one of three main festivals which the Jews celebrated each year. And every adult Jew was expected to attend. It reminded them of the tenth plague which God sent upon the Egyptians in the time of Moses, about 1438 B.C., when God delivered the Israelites from slavery and brought

them back to their land (see Exodus 12:1-20). They were also told to kill a lamb on the 14th of Nisan (about April 1) and smear some of the blood on the doorposts of their homes. Then they were to roast the lamb and eat it that evening, and be all ready to leave, because God would kill the oldest child in every Egyptian home at midnight. But He would pass over the homes which had the blood on the doorpost. And when all this happened the Egyptians told the Jews to leave.

26:2b The Jews spoke of future time differently than we do. They counted "today" as the first day, and "tomorrow" (for us) was the second day, etc. And their "day" began at 6:00 p.m. (see Genesis 1:5, 8, etc.). And so if Jesus said this on Tuesday evening, that day would end at 6:00 Wednesday evening (one day), and 6:00 Wednesday to 6:00 p.m. Thursday would be two days. And 6:00 p.m. Thursday to 6:00 p.m. Friday would be three days for the Jews, the day of the Passover.

c See note at 8:20.

26:3a See note on the Sadducees at 3:7b.

b See note at 5:22.

c See map on page 135 for Caiaphas' house.

d Joseph Caiaphas was made Head Priest in 18 A.D. and served for 18 years, when he was fired. He was the son-in-law of Annas, the former Head Priest, who was the richest, most powerful man in Israel in Jesus' day.

26:7 See picture and note at 26:20.

26:9 See John 12:1-8 for more on this story.

26:12 For the Jews' burial practices, see 27:59 and John 19:39-40.

26:14 That is, from the town of Kerioth, in Judea. So far as we know, Judas was the only apostle from Judea, the land of the Jews (see note at John 1:19). All the others were from Galilee.

- 26:15 A shekel was the standard Jewish coin, worth about 4 dinars or drachmas four days' wages. Thirty shekels was the standard price of a slave in those days - six months' wages.
- 26:17 The Passover festival was also called the No-yeast Bread festival, since the Jews had to remove all yeast from their homes during this week and eat only bread with no yeast. See Exodus 12:1-20, especially 14-20.
- 26:18 The only house in Jerusalem where Jesus and His followers are known to have gone was the house of John Mark's parents. See Acts 12:12 and also the map of Jerusalem on page 135.
- 26:20 In Jesus' day a dinner table was about 9 inches high, and the diners lay stretched out on cushions on the floor, with their heads over the table and supporting themselves on one arm (see picture). The host lay at the head of the table (top center on picture), with his guest of honor at his right and the next important guest on his left.
- 26:23 During the Passover meal the people dipped the little pieces the host passed around to them - bread, vegetables, herbs and meat - into a small dish filled with salt water and vinegar to flavor the food. And usually four persons shared the same dish. So by saying this Jesus narrowed the field of suspects down to three men.
- 26:26 Friday. See note at 26:2b, where we learned that while we think of the dinner as taking place on Maunday Thursday evening, it really was Friday for the Jews, since their "day" began at 6:00 p.m. And the Passover that year was on Friday. So the dinner and the crucifixion all took place the same day.
- 26:26a See picture and note at 14:17.
- b The bread used at the Passover was flat, since it was made without yeast. And this

pointed to Jesus' perfect, sinless body, since yeast is a picture of sin (see Matthew 13:33 and 16:12). So eating this "bread", as those who believe in Jesus, will make it our "staff of Eternal Life."

- 26:28 The word "covenant" in Genesis 9:9 and other places in the King James Version was simply an agreement between two or more people, in which each one promises to do something. We usually think of contracts as written agreements which two people sign. But all agreements do not have to be signed. For example, the agreement God made with Noah in Gen. 9: 6-17 was an oral agreement nobody signed. And later God made an agreement with the nation of Israel, after they left Egypt. This agreement was written, but never signed (See Exodus 12:1 and Lev. 27:34). We call this the "old" agreement (testament). But God made another agreement with all human beings when He sent His Son Jesus into the world to be our Savior. This was not written down at first and was never signed by anyone. But the apostles wrote it all down after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. This agreement was sealed when Jesus died, because He agreed to suffer and die to pay the penalty for all the sins of all men, women and children. That was His part of the agreement, but it wasn't signed. And that is what Jesus was referring to here - His death. And all any person has to do is believe that Jesus has died for his or her sins, and that person will have eternal Life! And we call this the new agreement.
- 26:29 Jesus is speaking here of the Day of His return at the end of the world to judge all men and women. See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 26:30 See map on page 135.
- 26:36 This garden was on the lower slopes of Mt.

Olive, right across the Kedron valley from the Temple (see map on page 135). The garden must have belonged to one of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem, like Mark's parents, at whose house they ate the Passover supper.

26:37 See 4:21.

26:39 In the ancient world criminals were often killed by giving them a cup of poisoned wine to drink. Therefore "the cup" became a word that could mean any kind of suffering or troubles which might bring about one's death.

26:41 See note at Romans 7:18.

26:45 See note at 8:20.

26:47a See note on Sadducees at 3:7b.

b See note at 5:22.

26:53 The Roman army "legion" was a regiment of 6,000 men. But for the Jews the number 12 was a symbolic number. The 12 tribes of Israel were the whole nation. Therefore 12 regiments of angels would be all the angels in heaven.

26:55 See the picture on page 63, and note at 21:12.

26:56 This would include all the prophecies about Jesus' death in the Old Testament, including all the deaths of all the lambs that were sacrificed.

26:57a See note at 26:3d and map on page 135 for the location of Caiaphas' palace.

b See note at 2:4.

26:60 See note at Mark 14:56.

26:61 See John 2:19.

26:63 See note at 1:1.

26:64 Here Jesus used a Hebrew saying which was the same as our English, "You said it!", meaning "I certainly am!" See Mark 14:62.

- 26:66 See note on the Sanhedrin at 5:22. At this meeting they were acting as the Supreme Court of Israel.
- 26:72 See note at 5:33.
- 27:1a See note on Sadducees at 3:7b.
- b See note at 5:22.
- 27:2 Pontius Pilate was appointed Governor of Judea by the Roman Emperor Tiberius in 26 A.D., about the same time that Jesus was baptized. Even though the Council had voted to put Jesus to death, they had no authority to carry out their plans. According to Roman law, the only man in the district of Judea who could give the order for an execution was the Roman Governor, since he was the personal representative of the Emperor himself. Therefore they had to get Pilate to give the order.
- 27:5 See picture on page 63, and note at 21:12. Here Matthew is talking about the Temple building. Only the priests were allowed to go inside that building. Therefore a 5-foot wall surrounded the Temple (see picture), and the yard around the building was called the Priests' Court, in which only priests were allowed. And so if Judas intended that the money be used for the Temple upkeep, he could throw it into the Priests' Court.
- 27:17a Barabbas means "the father's son". And so the people had to choose between two Jesus' the father's sons. But which one? See John 8:44.
- b See note at 1:1.
- 27:19 The Roman governors had a special platform built near the town square where they sat while the people came to have their legal quarrels settled. It was an outdoor "court-room". (See John 19:13).
- 27:27 See map on page 135.

27:29 See picture and note at 2:11a.

27:32 See note at 5:41.

27:35 Shaking the lot was a common way of making some person a winner, as in a lottery. Each person in the group would put his mark on a little stone or a piece of bone (his lot), and then throw it into a hat. Someone then shook the hat, and the first lot to pop out onto the ground named the winner. See Acts 1:26.

27:41 See note at 2:4.

27:52 The old translations and the Apostles' Creed translate this word as the "saints" - that is, people who are being sanctified, or made more holy, by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives. The word really means people who have been set apart as God's special people, to serve Him by living holy, God-pleasing lives - God's people.

27:55 See Luke 8:2-3.

27:62a The Jews called Friday "Preparation Day", since they had many things to do to get ready for Saturday, when no work could be done. Their days always began and ended at sunset (about 6:00 p.m.), so that as soon as the sun had set that Friday afternoon, it was already Saturday. See Luke 23:54 and Mark 15:42. This visit to Pilate probably took place early that evening.

b See note on the Sadducees at 3:7b.

c See note at 3:7a.

28:9 See picture and note at 2:11a.

28:15 Matthew is referring here to the time when he wrote his gospel, probably around 45 A.D., fifteen years after Jesus' resurrection.

28:19a See note at 6:32

28:19b See Romans 6:3-4, and note at John 15:5.

28:20 See what Jesus said about all this in 24:14.

Mark

Title John Mark (Acts 13:5) was the son of one of Jesus' closest followers in Jerusalem, at whose home Jesus celebrated the last Passover. The family probably also owned the garden in Gethsemane. The early church believed that Mark wrote his gospel in Rome from information supplied by Peter, and that he wrote it for the people in Rome.

1:1 See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:4 See note at Matthew 3:1b.

1:6 See note at Matthew 3:4.

1:7 See note at John 1:27.

1:14 See 6:14-18.

1:16 Pictured here is a small round throw-net. Nets just like this are still in use.

1:18 See note at Matthew 4:19.

1:21a See note at Matthew 12:1b.

b See picture and note at 3:1.

c See note at Matthew 4:23.

1:22 See note at Matthew 2:4.

1:24 See Isaiah 42:1, 49:5-6, 52:13.

1:26 See note at Matthew 4:24.

1:40 See note at Matthew 8:2b.

1:41 See note at Matthew 8:3.

1:44a See note at Matthew 8:4.

b See Leviticus 14:2-32.

2:4 In Jesus' day only a few rich people had a bed anything like the beds we use today. Most of the people slept on little padded rugs or mats, like the Japanese and Chinese use today. And when a crippled person was

taken into the street to beg for food or money, he or she was always laid on such a mat.

2:6 See note at Matthew 2:4. These were probably Levite scribes who were also teachers, but not rabbis.

2:10 See note at Matthew 8:20.

2:13 See note at Matthew 4:23.

2:14a Levi was Matthew's other name.

b See picture and note at Matthew 9:9.

2:15 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.

2:16 See note at Matthew 3:7a.

2:18 See note at Matthew 6:16.

2:22 See picture and note at Luke 5:37.

2:23 See note at Matthew 12:1b

2:24 See note at Matthew 3:7a.

2:26 See 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

3:1 The meeting house (synagogue) came into being long after the giving of the Law to Moses. It had its beginning during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon from 606-536 B.C. Since the Jews could no longer gather in the Temple, they began to meet in their homes to pray and sing the psalms and hear the Bible read and explained by a rabbi or one of the older men. And when they returned to Judah in 536, they brought this new custom with them and built little one-room meeting houses in every town and village, and several in the larger cities. And they gathered for services every Saturday and Wednesday, just as they had done in Babylon. Every meeting house was governed by a Board of ten of the leading older men in the community. If there was a rabbi (teacher) or scribe in the town he would be the one to explain the Bible to the people and children. If not, one of the Board did this. Visiting rabbis were always

invited to do so. The room was generally square, and the only furniture was a chair for the teacher on a little raised platform, and ten chairs for the elders in front of the platform. The people either stood or sat on the floor during the service.

- 3:6 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 3:8 See map opposite page 1.
- 3:14a See notes at Matthew 4:19 and 8:19b.
- b See note at Matthew 10:2.
- 3:18a Like Matthew, this man also had two names. He is called Nathanael in John 1:45-50.
- b This man also had two names. In Luke's lists (6:16 and Acts 1:13) and in John 14:22, he is called Judas, the son of James.
- 3:22a See note at Matthew 2:4.
- b Beelzebul was the Hebrew name for Satan, meaning "the lord of filth".
- 4:1 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 4:20 See Luke 8:8.
- 4:21 See picture and note at Matthew 5:15-16.
- 4:25 See note at Matthew 13:12.
- 5:1 See map opposite page 1.
- 5:6 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 5:7 See note at Matthew 5:33.
- 5:9 A legion was a division in the Roman army numbering 6,000 men. Because of this the word was also used for any large number.
- 5:14 Such a large herd as this (2,000 pigs, 5:13) would probably be the combined herds of all the people in the whole area.
- 5:27 See picture and note at Luke 8:44.
- 5:34 See note at John 14:27.
- 5:39 See note at Matthew 9:24.
- 6:2a See note at Matthew 4:23.

- 6:2b See picture and note at 3:1.
6:3 See note at Matthew 1:1.
6:7 See note at Matthew 10:2.
6:11 See picture and note at Matthew 10:14.
6:14 See note at Matthew 14:1.
6:15 See Malachi 4:5-6.
6:18 See Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21.
6:21 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
6:23 See note at Matthew 5:33.
6:32 Luke 9:10 says it was near Bethsaida (page X).
6:37 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
6:38 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
6:53 See note at Matthew 14:34.
6:55 See picture and note at Mark 2:4.
6:56a See note at Matthew 11:16.
 b See picture and note at Luke 8:44.
7:1a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
 b See note at Matthew 2:4a.
7:3 See note at Matthew 15:2.
7:4 See note at John 2:6.
7:24 See map opposite page 1.
7:25 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
7:31 See map opposite page 1.
8:5 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
8:10 The location of Dalmanutha is unknown. See note at Matthew 15:39.
8:11 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
8:15 See note at Matthew 14:1.
8:21 See Matthew 16:12.
8:27 See note at Matthew 16:13.
8:29 See note at Matthew 1:1.
8:31a See note at Matthew 8:20.
 b See note at Matthew 5:22.

- 8:31c See note at Matthew 3:7b.
d See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 9:5 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 9:12 See Isaiah 53:1-9, especially vss 2-3,5,7.
- 9:13 Here Jesus is referring to 1 Kings 19:1-3 and 9-11 (see 18:20-46 for background), and compare Mark 6:17-29 to see the parallel.
- 9:18 See note at Matthew 4:24.
- 9:28 See 6:13. Here, however, they couldn't use Jesus' authority by talking to the spirit, because this spirit was deaf.
- 9:31 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 10:2 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 10:17a See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
b See Matthew 21:38 for the meaning of "heir".
- 10:20 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 10:25 See note at Matthew 19:24.
- 10:28 See note at Matthew 4:19.
- 10:33a See note at Matthew 8:20.
b See note on Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
c See note at Matthew 2:4.
d See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 11:2a See note at Matthew 21:2a.
b See note at Matthew 21:2b.
- 11:11 See picture of the Temple-yard on page 63.
- 11:15 See picture, page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 11:17 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 11:27 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 12:11 See note at Matthew 21:42.
- 12:13 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 12:14a See note at Matthew 8:19b.
b See note at Matthew 21:32.
- 12:15 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.

- 12:18 See note on the Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
- 12:26 See note at John 8:24.
- 12:28 See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- 12:35 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 12:38 See note at Matthew 11:16.
- 12:39a See picture and note at 3:1.
- b See note at Matthew 23:6a.
- 12:41 In one of the covered walkways along the walls of the Women's Court (see picture on page 63), there was a section called the "treasury", which was made up of 13 collection boxes that were shaped like trumpets standing upright on their wide mouths, with a small opening for the money, looking like the mouthpiece of a trumpet, at the top. The money was used for the upkeep and operation of the temple, and each of the trumpets had a small sign stating what the money deposited there was used for. The people were expected to give according to their means, but the donations were free-will offerings, since no records were kept of the gifts.
- 12:42 See picture and note at Luke 21:2.
- 13:3 See map on page 135.
- 13:6 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 13:10 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 13:26 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 14:1a See note at Matthew 26:2b.
- b See note at Matthew 26:2a.
- c See note at Matthew 26:17.
- d See note on Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
- e See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 14:3a See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- b Nard was a very fragrant smelling juice which was taken from the head of an East

Indian plant. It was used either pure or mixed in perfumes and ointments.

- 14:5 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
- 14:10 See note at Matthew 26:14.
- 14:15 See map of Jerusalem on page 135.
- 14:18 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 14:20 See note at Matthew 26:23.
- 14:22
Title See note at Matthew 26:26 Title
- 14:22a See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- b See note at Matthew 26:26b.
- 14:24 See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 14:32 See map on page 135.
- 14:36 See note at Matthew 26:39.
- 14:38 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 14:43 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 14:45 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 14:52 This was Mark's way of "signing" his gospel, just as artists sign their paintings by putting their face or writing their initials in small letters in a corner or some inconspicuous place. Ancient authors did the same thing. But it was bad manners to mention yourself or writing "I" or "me". They called this "literary modesty". In this case Mark was the young man in the sheet.
- 14:53a See map on page 135 for Caiaphas' house.
- b See note on Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
- c See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 14:56 According to Jewish law, a person could not be found guilty of any crime, or be punished for any crime, on the testimony of just a single witness. Every accusation had to be supported by "two or three witnesses" (Deuteronomy 19:15). See also Matthew 18:16. In order to give the fullest amount of protec-

tion to the defendant, the rabbis understood this to mean that the statements of the two or three complaining witnesses must agree perfectly. See also the note at John 5:31-32.

14:58 See John 2:19.

14:61a See note on the Sanhedrin at Matthew 5:22. At this meeting they were acting as the Supreme Court of Israel, and they were trying to find Jesus guilty of saying insulting things about God (blaspheming), since this crime was punished by death.

b See note at Matthew 1:1.

14:62 See note at Matthew 8:20.

14:65 See Matthew 26:67-68.

15:1a See note on the Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.

b See note at Mark 3:1.

c See note at Matthew 2:4.

d See note at Matthew 27:2.

15:16 See map on page 135.

15:19 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.

15:21 See note at Matthew 5:41.

15:22 See map on page 135.

15:23 Myrrh was a thick sap which was taken from a tree in Arabia. It was very fragrant, and was used in making perfumes, ointments and incense. It was also a powerful drug, with a narcotic or pain killing effect. It had a very bitter taste, however (see Matthew 27:34). This was the only merciful thing done at a crucifixion, to give the condemned man a shot of myrrh to deaden the first pains.

15:24 See picture and note at Matthew 27:35.

15:41 See Luke 8:2-3.

15:42 See note at Matthew 27:62.

16:1a It was now after 6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

- 16:1b The burial was hastily done late Friday afternoon because all "work" was forbidden on Saturday, which began at 6:00 p.m. There had been no time to wash the body and rub the spices and perfumes on it, and no time to cut a sheet into long strips which would be sprinkled with perfume and wound around the body. See also John 11:44 and 19:39-40.
- 16:8 All of our best and oldest manuscripts break off here in the middle of a sentence. In fact, quite often the last or first part of a roll got broken off as it was rolled and unrolled many times. So this is the end of this gospel as we have it. And certainly the parts which follow were added later to make it complete, because the style is not Mark's style. In fact everything in verses 9-20 has been copied from Matthew's, Luke's or John's gospels and the book of Acts. And some of the manuscripts which have these verses have marks or notes which tell us that what follows is not found in the oldest manuscripts.
- 16:9-10 See Matthew 28:9-10 and John 20:11-18.
- 16:11 See Luke 24:11.
- 16:12-13 See Luke 24:13-35.
- 16:14 See Luke 24:36-43 and John 20:19-23.
- 16:15 See Matthew 28:16-20.
- 16:16 See John 3:18 and 3:36.
- 16:17 See Acts 3:1-10, 5:12, 6:8, 9:32-43, 10:44-46, 13:6-12, 16:16-18, 19:6, 19:11.
- 16:18 See Luke 10:18, Acts 28:3-6.
- 16:19 See Matthew 26:64 and Acts 1:1-9.
- 16:20 See Acts 2-28.

- Title** Luke was one of Jesus' early followers, and he tells us that he gathered his information from many people, beginning with Zechariah and Mary. Later he travelled with Paul throughout the Greek world on Paul's last three trips. Luke wrote his gospel for the Greeks, since he was a Greek.
- 1:5a See note at Matthew 2:1b.
- b The priests were divided into 24 families, going back to the time of David. Each family worked in the Temple one week at a time, twice a year, in regular order.
- c Aaron, Moses' older brother, was the first Head Priest of the nation of Israel (Exodus 28:1). And Elisabeth was a member of this important family in Israel.
- 1:6 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 1:9a See picture and note at Matthew 27:35.
- b See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12. Here Luke is talking about the Temple itself, the small building in the upper right-hand corner of the Temple-yard. Only priests could enter the Temple, and on all days except the Day of Atonement only one priest went in at sunrise and one at sunset to burn the incense at those prayer hours, while the people stood outside praying.
- 1:26 See map opposite page 1.
- 1:39 See note at Matthew 3:1b.
- 1:52 See Proverbs 3:34.
- 1:55 See Genesis 17:7.
- 1:59 Circumcision, cutting off the foreskin of the penis, was the "sign" or seal of the agreement which God made with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), that Abraham's family would become a great nation, and that the promised Savior would be born into that nation. The instructions were that all male children in

Abraham's family were to be circumcised; and this "sign" would remind them of this agreement (Genesis 17:11-12). So circumcision became the special mark of Abraham's family, and the Old Testament equivalent of baptism, which is the distinctive "mark" of a Christian. Understood in this way, both of these marks identify the individual as a believer, a member of God's chosen people.

- 1:67 The word "prophet" means a spokesman. Among the Jews it meant one who speaks for God.
- 1:72 See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 1:73 See Genesis 12:1-3 and note at Matthew 5:33.
- 2:1 Augustus was the title of honor given to Octavian, the nephew of Julius Caesar, who became the first and greatest of the Roman Emperors. He ruled the vast Roman Empire as the sole ruler from 31 B.C. to 14 A.D.
- 2:4 See map opposite page 1, and note at Matthew 3:1b.
- 2:7 The word used here does not mean an inn, but a second floor room used as a dining room and guest room. Many shepherd homes used the ground floor as a barn for their sheep, with straw and feed box, etc., while the family lived upstairs, where they might have a guest room.
- 2:11 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 2:14 Our Greek manuscripts are all missing something here, since the words, as they stand, make no sense. The ancient Latin translation, "peace among men of goodwill", is literal, but meaningless. And the King James "peace, goodwill to men", is both incorrect and impossible as the text stands. But the simple addition of the word "God", which could easily have been omitted in copying the early manuscripts, would give a sensible reading - "and on earth, peace for all people because

of God's goodwill."

2:21 See note at 1:59.

2:22 After the birth of a child, the mother was ritually 'unclean'. That is, she was not allowed to enter the Temple-grounds for 41 day. This was her period of 'purification'. When this was over, she brought a special sin-offering and thank-offering to the Temple (see verse 27). See Leviticus 12:1-8.

2:27 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.

2:32 See note at Matthew 6:32.

2:36 See note at 1:67.

2:37 See note at Matthew 6:16.

2:41 See note at Matthew 26:2a.

2:42 At this time Jesus was still regarded as a child, since a boy didn't become a Son of the Law (adult member) until age 13. But it shows how anxious He was to go to the Temple

2:46a See picture on page 63, and note at Matthew 21:12.

b See note at Matthew 8:19b.

3:1a Tiberius was the adopted son of Augustus, the first Roman Emperor. During the last two years of his father's life (12-14 A.D.), Tiberius ruled as co-Emperor, and then succeeded his father as the sole ruler of the Empire from 14 to 37 A.D. The fifteenth year of his reign would be 26 A.D.

b See note at Matthew 27:2.

c See note at Matthew 14:1.

3:2 See note on the Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b. For Annas, see note at John 18:13, and for Caiaphas, see note at Matthew 26:3d.

3:12 See note at Matthew 9:9.

3:15 See note at Matthew 1:1.

3:16 See note at John 1:27.

- 3:17 After the grain had been threshed (beaten) to knock the hard outer husks off the kernels of wheat, a man separated the wheat from the chaff (husks) by picking up a forkful of the grain with a separating fork (see picture on page 169) and throwing it up in the air on a windy day. The wind would then blow the light chaff away, leaving the good wheat in a pile.
- 3:23a Among the Jews 30 was the "levitical age," that is, the age when the priests began their twenty-year period of service in the Temple. See Numbers 4:3.
- b Eli was Mary's father. Luke gives Mary's genealogy; Matthew gives Joseph's (1:1-16). Both of them were members of David's family, but through different sons of David.
- 3:38 From Jesus (vs 23) to Adam (vs 38) are 77 names. For the Jews 77 was a meaningful number, picturing something very complete (see note at Revelation 1:4a). In this case it was a complete family record, going all the way back to Adam, who was created in 4004 B.C.
- 4:7 See the picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 4:15a See note at Matthew 4:23.
- b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 4:16a See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- b When a visiting rabbi was in town, the Board of the meeting house would always invite him to read the lesson and then explain it to the congregation. The custom was that one stood to read the lesson and then sat in the chair while teaching or explaining the text (see verse 20). The explanation would have been more like a modern Bible study than a sermon. Since Jesus was already a rather famous rabbi (teacher), He was naturally asked to take charge of the service in Nazareth..
- 4:17 In the time of Jesus and the apostles all

of God's goodwill."

2:21 See note at 1:59.

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3:12 See note at Matthew 9:9.

3:15 See note at Matthew 1:1.

3:16 See note at John 1:27.

- 5:27b See picture and note at Matthew 9:9.
- 5:29 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 5:33 See note at Matthew 6:16.
- 5:37 In Jesus' day there was no glass, nor metal cans or bottles, so people kept their water in clay jars of all sizes, and put their wine in wineskins. They used the entire skin of a sheep or goat. After it was dried in the sun, all the flesh on the inside was scraped off, and then the whole skin was sewed together again, with the clean side on the inside, as before. The legs were cut off close to the body and the holes were sewed up. And the head was cut off at the top of the neck, and this opening was used as the "mouth" of the "bottle". Skins were used instead of clay jars, because they were strong, but soft and pliable, and wouldn't break as easily as clay.
- 5:1 See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- 5:2a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- b See note at Matthew 24:20.
- 5:4 See 1 Samuel 21:1-6.
- 5:6a See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- b See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 5:13 See note at Matthew 10:2.
- 5:14 See note at Mark 3:18a.
- 5:16 This man also had another name, Thaddeus, which is used in Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18.
- 7:11 See map opposite page 1.
- 7:14 After a person died, the body was prepared for burial as described in the note at Mark 16:1b. And the next day, after the friends had come to comfort the family, the body was placed in a large open basket (see picture) and carried outside the town to be buried, since a dead body would make the whole city "unclean" if it was kept any longer in town.

- 7:16 This was a reference to a prophecy made in Deuteronomy 18:15, referring to Jesus, the promised Savior (Messiah).
- 7:19 This was another reference to the Messiah.
- 7:23 See Matthew 11:6.
- 7:29 See picture and note at Matthew 9:9.
- 7:30a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- b See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- 7:32 See note at Matthew 11:16.
- 7:34 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 7:36 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 7:40 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 7:41 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
- 7:49 See 5:21.
- 7:50 See note at John 14:27.
- 8:2 That is, from Magdala.
- 8:16 See picture and note at Matthew 5:15.
- 8:18 See note at Matthew 13:12.
- 8:28 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 8:29 See picture at Mark 5:4.
- 8:30 See note at Mark 5:9.
- 8:31 The Greek word used here is abyss, and it became the common Jewish word for hell. See Revelation 9:1-2 and 20:1-3.
- 8:34 See note at Mark 5:14.
- 8:44 In Numbers 15:37-40 the Israelites were commanded to wear four tassels on the corners of their cloaks to remind them of the great work of God in delivering them from slavery in Egypt (see picture).
- 8:52 See note at Matthew 9:24.
- 9:1 See note at Matthew 10:2.
- 9:5 See picture and note at Matthew 10:14.
- 9:7 See note at Matthew 14:1

- 9:8 See Malachi 4:5-6.
- 9:9 See 23:8.
- 9:13 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- 9:20 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 9:22a See note at Matthew 8:20.
- b See note at Matthew 5:22.
- c See note on Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
- d See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- 9:27 See John 3:3, & the next section, vss 28-36.
- 9:38 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 9:39 See note at Matthew 4:24.
- 9:57 See note at Matthew 4:19.
- 10:5 See note at Matthew 10:13.
- 10:6 The original Greek says "a son of peace".
- 10:11 See picture and note at Matthew 10:14.
- 10:13 See map opposite page 1.
- 10:14 See map opposite page 1.
- 10:25 See Matthew 21:38 for definition of an heir.
- 10:33 The Samaritans and Jews were bitter enemies, and hated each other. See John 4:9 and Matthew 5:43-45.
- 10:35 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
- 11:5 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- 11:15 See note at Matthew 10:25.
- 11:30 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 11:31 This was the queen of Sheba, who came to see Solomon. See 1 Kings 10:1-10.
- 11:33a See picture and note at Matthew 5:15.
- b See note at Matthew 13:52b.
- 11:37a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- b See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 11:43a See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- b See note at Matthew 11:16.

- 11:44 See note at Matthew 23:27.
- 11:45a See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- b See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 12:6 An assar was a large Roman copper coin, equal to 1/16 of a dinar, or drachma. In today's values it would be worth about a half-hour's wages. (See picture).
- 12:19 See Isaiah 22:13. How true this is today.
- 12:30 See note at Matthew 6:32. Luke here uses the words, "the nations of the world," which reminds us of John's use of the word "world." See note at John 7:7.
- 12:34 See Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 18:22, and 1 Timothy 6:17-19.
- 12:35 See picture and note at Matthew 5:15.
- 12:37 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 12:58 In the ancient world the king or his appointed governor, as in Judea, made the local laws and acted as judge in cases of dispute.
- 13:10a See note at Matthew 4:23.
- b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 14:1a See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- b See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 14:3 See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- 14:7 See note at Matthew 23:6a.
- 14:11 See Proverbs 3:34.
- 14:12 The people in Israel in those days ate only two meals a day - breakfast about 10 a.m., and dinner about 4 or 5 p.m.
- 14:14 See note at Romans 1:17
- 15:1 See picture and note at Matthew 9:9.
- 15:2a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- b See note at Matthew 2:4.
- c The Pharisees and scribes were very religious people, and for this reason they were

very careful whom they associated with. Thus they would have nothing to do with tax collectors, who were famous for their dishonesty, nor with anyone else whose life was at all sinful, because all such people were unclean (sinful). And the rules in their Tradition (see Matthew 15:2) made it a sin to have anything to do with such people. See also the note at Acts 11:3.

- 15:8 A drachma was the standard Greek coin, equal in value to the Roman dinar - a day's wages for the average workingman.
- 16:8 The Greek says "children of light". Compare Matthew 5:14, John 8:12 and 12:36.
- 17:2 See Matthew 18:1-6.
- 17:8 See picture on page 211.
- 17:12 See note at Matthew 8:2b.
- 17:14 See note at Matthew 8:4.
- 17:16 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 17:22 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 17:30 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 18:3 In Jesus' day the rich and religious Pharisees and Sadducees paid no attention to the laws that protected widows, and they took away their houses when they couldn't pay their husband's debts. See Mark 12:40.
- 18:10a See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- b See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- c See note at Matthew 9:9.
- 18:12 See note at Matthew 6:16.
- 18:14a See note at Romans 1:17
- b See Proverbs 3:34.
- 18:18 For the meaning of "heir" see Matthew 21:38.
- 18:22a See 12:33, Matthew 6:19-21 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

- 18:22b See note at Matthew 4:19.
- 18:25 See note at Matthew 19:24.
- 18:31 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 18:32 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 18:37 See note at Matthew 2:23b.
- 19:2 See note at Matthew 9:9.
- 19:7 See 15:2c and the note there.
- 19:9 Abraham was called "the father of believers" (Romans 4:1), and he was noted for his faith. Therefore Jesus is saying that Zacchaeus was now a believer also. See also 16:22.
- 19:12 This was the common practice in those days, that the Roman Emperor appointed some rich or powerful man to be the "king" of his country and rule as the emperor's right hand man (like Herod the Great). To us it seems like a very strange use of the word "king". See the note at Matthew 2:1b.
- 19:13 A mina was a Greek unit of weight, like a talent. It was the weight of 100 drachmas, or dinars, about 4 month's wages for an average workingman.
- 19:26 See note at Matthew 13:12.
- 19:29 See map opposite page 1.
- 19:30a See note at Matthew 21:2a.
- b See note at Matthew 21:2b.
- 19:45 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 19:47a See note at Matthew 4:23.
- b See note on Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.
- c See note at Matthew 2:4a.
- d See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 20:17 See note at Matthew 21:42.
- 20:21 See note at Matthew 21:32.
- 20:24 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.

- 20:37 The Sadducees believed that only the first five books of Moses were God's inspired Word. Therefore Jesus made it clear that Moses also taught that the dead will be raised back to life, which they didn't believe.
- 20:39 See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 20:46a See note at Matthew 11:16.
- b See note at Matthew 23:6b.
- c See note at Matthew 23:6a.
- 21:1 See picture and note at Mark 12:41.
- 21:2 A lepton was the smallest Roman coin, worth 1/8 of an assar (see picture and note at Luke 12:6). A quad was the next smallest coin. A lepton would be worth only 4 minutes of work, and a quad only 8 minutes' worth.
- 21:5 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 21:24 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 21:27 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 21:37 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 22:1a See note at Matthew 26:17.
- b See note at Matthew 26:2a.
- 22:2a See note at Matthew 3:7b.
- b See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 22:3 See note at Matthew 26:14.
- 22:12 See map on page 135. No one can say exactly where this house was located.
- 22:14 Title See note at Matthew 26:26 Title
- 22:14 See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 22:17 There were four different cups of wine that were passed around during a Passover supper. The Jews called this first one the cup of thanksgiving, which was drunk before eating.
- 22:19a See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.

22:19b See note at Matthew 26:26b.

22:20a This would be the fourth cup, which was drunk after supper, and it was called the cup of atonement, referring to the blood of the lamb, shed to save the oldest son. The cup of blessing (1 Corinthians 10:16) was the third cup, also drunk after supper. And this would be a very fitting one for us Christians to drink.

b See note at Matthew 26:28.

22:22 See note at Matthew 8:20.

22:25a See note at Matthew 6:32.

b Some of the Greek rulers in the time before Christ took fancy titles like this.

22:27 God often spoke of the coming Savior as My Servant, as in Isaiah 42:1 and other places.

22:30 Only the highest officials in a kingdom were allowed to eat at the king's table.

22:39 See map on page 135.

22:42 See note at Matthew 26:39.

22:53 See the picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.

22:54 See map on page 135 Caiaphas' palace.

22:66a See note at Matthew 5:22. At this meeting, the Council, or Sanhedrin, was acting as the Supreme Court of Israel.

b See note at Matthew 2:4a.

22:67 See note at Matthew 1:1.

22:69 See Psalm 110:1. The King's right hand man.

23:1 See note at Matthew 27:2.

23:7 See note at Matthew 14:1.

23:8 See 9:9.

23:26 See note at Matthew 5:41.

23:33 See map on page 135.

23:34 See picture and note at Matthew 27:35.

- 23:50 See note at Romans 1:17
- 23:54 See note at Matthew 27:62a.
- 23:56 See Mark 16:1, and also the note there.
- 24:5 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 24:7a See note at Matthew 8:20.
- b The Jews spoke of all non-Jews (gentiles) as "sinners", because they were unbelievers. See also 18:32 and Mark 10:33.
- 24:13 See map opposite page 1.
- 24:18 The fact that the author doesn't name the other man anywhere in this long conversation tells us that he, Luke, was that other man. See note at Mark 14:51.
- 24:20 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 24:21 Here Luke was referring to Jesus' prophecy that He would rise again on the third day. See Matthew 16:21, 17:23, and 20:19.
- 24:26 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 24:30a See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- b See 9:16.
- 24:46 See Jonah 1:17.
- 24:47 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 24:48 See Acts 1:8.
- 24:51 See Acts 1:9-10.
- 24:53 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.

John

Title John's gospel was written 25 years after the latest of the other gospels. And it is strikingly different from the other three gospels which all told pretty much the same story about Jesus. John gives us an entirely different picture, or rather, a series of pictures, of Jesus. While the other three told most of what Jesus said and did, John is trying to show us who Jesus is, namely God's eternal Son. John uses only a few incidents from Jesus' life, and he uses each of these stories to show us some important truth about Jesus. Only when it comes to the Passion Week does John follow the pattern of the others as he tells of Jesus' death. But here also most of John's material is new, not found in the other three.

1:1 It is clear that John is talking about Jesus. Here he calls Him "the Word", which is a metaphor, or word picture. Words are the things we use to tell others what we are thinking. Jesus is God's "Word", since He is the one who tells us about God and what He is thinking.

1:4 Life, or "energy", exists in many different forms - as light, heat, motion, electrical energy, atomic energy, etc., all of which are interchangeable. When God created light, therefore, (Genesis 1:3), He created all forms of energy from the Life existing in Himself. Here then the word "light" really includes all other forms of energy.

1:5 This is also a metaphor, or word picture. Darkness stands for the whole world of men, fallen into sin, and living in darkness. Sinful men may destroy much of God's creation, but they cannot destroy His light and Life. Light and darkness are opposites, just

as God and Satan are opposites.

1:11 See Matthew 23:39 and Luke 13:35.

1:19a John uses the Word "Jews" in a much different way than any other biblical writer. He doesn't mean "the people of Israel" as a whole, which is the usual meaning of the word, since they were all descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In John's gospel the "Jews" are primarily the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, in Judea, from which the word "Jew" comes. And John means the Sadducees and Pharisees, who were Jesus' enemies from the very beginning. And sometimes he means all the people of Jerusalem and Judea who followed those leaders. Ever since the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon in 536 B.C., there had been bad feelings between the Israelites living in Judea and those in Galilee. And John was plainly one of those Galileans who had a basic dislike of the "Jews", because the Jerusalem Jews looked down on the peasants and farmers in Galilee, and thought of themselves as the only "real" Jews.

b See note on the Sadducees at Matthew 3:7b.

c Priests, Levites, and Sadducees, are all somewhat similar words. All the members of the tribe of Levi were Levites, but only some of these served as Priests at the Temple. And the Sadducees were a rather sizable group of the richer and more powerful priests and scribes, who, of course, were all Levites.

1:20 See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:21 See the prophecy at Deuteronomy 18:15.

1:24 See note at Matthew 3:7a.

1:27 In the ancient world, this act was always performed by the lowest ranking slave.

1:29 This is a reference to the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:20-22, who figuratively carried away all the sins of the Israelites each year.

1:38 See note at Matthew 8:19b.

1:41a This is another example of the custom of the author refusing to say anything about himself directly, but still showing us in a quiet way that he was there, as the other of the two followers. See note at Mark 14:51-52.

b See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:43 See note at Matthew 4:19.

1:45 See Deuteronomy 18:15.

1:51 See note at Matthew 8:20.

2:6 The Jews' laws required them to wash complete before coming to the altar with their sacrifices or taking part in their festivals. They also had to wash their hands and utensils before eating. All this was to remind them that they were a "holy (clean) people" (Exodus 19:6-11), and that their hearts must be truly clean at all times, and especially when they approached the Lord, who is absolutely holy.

2:13 See note at Matthew 26:2a.

2:14 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.

2:18 See note at 1:19a.

3:1a See note at Matthew 3:7a.

b See note at Matthew 5:22.

3:2 See note at Matthew 8:19b.

3:6 See note at Romans 7:18.

3:7 See 1 John 5:1-4 and 18, and 1 Peter 1:23.

3:8 This verse contains a "play on words" in both the Greek and Hebrew languages. And this was also one of Jesus' favorite ways of teaching

- to use a word which has two different meanings in the same sentence, but with both meanings. Here the word translated as "wind" is used again as the last word in the sentence with the meaning of "spirit". However, both of these words have certain things in common. First, both of them cannot be seen with our human eyes. But sometimes we can feel their presence. And we can often see the effects they produce. And finally, both of them are, or can be, so powerful as to be completely beyond man's control.

3:13 See note at Matthew 8:20.

3:14 See Numbers 21:9. The bronze snake on the pole was a picture of Jesus on the cross.

3:23 See Luke 3:3.

3:25a See note at 1:19a.

b See note at 2:6.

3:28 See note at Matthew 1:1.

3:29 Among the Jews the new husband's friend brought the bride to her new home after the big wedding dinner, while the new husband stayed behind for a few last toasts with his friends. Since this was always rather late at night, the husband's friend then stood by the locked door, guarding the bride, and he would open the door only at the sound of the husband's voice. Thus the friend stood there listening for the husband's voice.

3:35 See Matthew 28:18.

4:9 See note at Acts 10:28.

4:20 Sychar was located at the foot of Mt. Gerizim, where the Samaritans built their temple.

4:27 In that part of the world in those days no man would ever talk to a woman in public. To do so was very impolite and "wrong".

- 4:37 See Micah 6:15.
- 5:1 This was probably a Pentecost festival in May or June. Pentecost (which means 50) was a spring harvest festival which started 50 days after the Passover.
- 5:2a Beth-zatha probably means either the "house of bubbling" or "house of healing". It was reported that every so often the water bubbled in this pool, just like some of the springs in Yellowstone Park, no doubt due to the release of some underground gasses. And many people had been healed there, according to reports that were going around, after stepping into the pool right after it had bubbled. This explains verses 3-7, including verse 4, which was added much later by some scribe who was repeating a kind of fairy tale which had grown up about the pool
- b During the Babylonian captivity (606-536 BC) the Jews who were forced to live in Babylon as slaves, also had to learn and speak Aramaic, the language of Syria (Aram), which was the language spoken everywhere in the Babylonian Empire. And after 536 only the rabbis knew how to speak Hebrew, because they kept on studying the Bible, which was written in Hebrew. Aramaic was like Hebrew in some ways since it was a sister language. This was why the Jews who were living in Judea in Jesus' time spoke Aramaic. And at that same time these Jews looked down on many of the other Jews who spoke Greek, which had become the language almost everyone spoke after the Greeks conquered the near eastern world in 323 B.C. And so in Jesus' day these Aramaic speaking Jews considered themselves to be the only "real" Jews. (See Acts 6:1).
- 5:8 See picture and note at Mark 2:4.
- 5:9 See note at Matthew 12:1b.

- 5:10a See note at 1:19a.
- b The Jews mentioned here were Pharisees (see note at Matthew 3:7a). And the "law" they were talking about was not Moses' Law, but their big book of laws and rules made by the rabbis, called the Tradition of the Elders (see note at Matthew 15:2).
- 5:14 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 5:15 See note at 1:19a.
- 5:27 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 5:31 According to Jewish law, nothing could be accepted as a proven fact unless there were two or three witnesses who could swear that it was true. See Deuteronomy 19:15.
- 5:32 Here Jesus stresses the fact that He can present at least two witnesses to His identity as God's Son. Therefore what He was saying must be accepted as true. See also the note at Mark 14:56.
- 5:33 Here Jesus names John the Baptist as His second witness.
- 6:1 This was the new name for Lake Galilee, named after the present Roman Emperor.
- 6:7 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
- 6:9 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- 6:10 See the picture of an ancient dinner at Matthew 26:20.
- 6:14 This is a reference to one of the prophecies of the coming Savior found in Deuteronomy 18:15.
- 6:25 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 6:27 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 6:41 See note at 1:19a.
- 6:51 See Matthew 26:26.
- 6:52 See note at 1:19a.

- 6:56 See note at 15:5.
- 6:59a See note at Matthew 4:23.
- b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 6:62 See Acts 1:9.
- 6:63 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 6:65 See verse 44.
- 7:2 The Tent Festival was the third of the great Jewish festivals which every adult Jew was required to attend. It began on the 15th day of the 7th month (Ethanim), about October 1st, and was a fall harvest festival. During the 8 days of the festival the people built little "tents" out of branches in their yards, or on their flat roofs, or in the big open Temple-yard, or in the vacant lots in Jerusalem, or outside the city. They were supposed to live in these tents during the 8 days, commemorating the 40 years in which their forefathers lived in tents in the wilderness while they were going from Egypt to their land of Canaan under Moses.
- 7:7 John often used the word "world" with a very special meaning, namely to describe the entire mass of unbelievers, and all the sinful things going on in the world. See 1 John 2:15-17.
- 7:14a See picture on page 63, and note at Matthew 21:12.
- b See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 7:21 See 5:1-10 especially verses 9b-10.
- 7:22a See note at Luke 1:59.
- b Every child was to be circumcised on the eighth day, and they did this even though it might be Saturday. See note at Matthew 12:1b and Luke 1:59.
- c For the Jews the "forefathers" were Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. See Genesis 12-25.
- 7:26a See note at Matthew 5:22.

- 7:26b See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 7:27 See Hebrews 7:3.
- 7:28 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 7:30 See note at 1:19a.
- 7:45 See verse 32.
- 7:52a See Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses was talking about the Messiah.
- b Verses 7:53-8:11 are not found in any of our oldest and best manuscripts. It appears first in a 6th century manuscript (about 550) which is famous for the many notes and other details which are added to the text. A few much later manuscripts have re-copied this same story, but not all of them put it in the same place. A number of them put it in Luke's gospel. Thus it seems clear that this section is not a part of John's original text. It might be a true story which actually happened which none of the four gospel writers included in their accounts. We have included this at the end of the gospel, following 21:25, where it is actually found in some of the manuscripts (see page 327).
- 8:12a See note at 8:24 below.
- b See 1:4 and 1:9.
- 8:13a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- b See note at 5:31.
- 8:17 See note at 5:32.
- 8:20a See note at Matthew 4:23.
- b See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- c See picture and note at Mark 12:41.
- 8:22 See note at 1:19a. These men must have been Sadducees, or priests, who didn't believe that the dead will be raised back to life. They believed that when a person died, he or she completely disappeared.

- 8:23 See note at 7:7.
- 8:24 "I AM" is God's personal name, which He revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14. And here John reminds us that Jesus identified Himself by this name many different times. See 8:28, 10:7, 14, etc.
- 8:28 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 8:52 See note at 1:19a.
- 8:58 See note at 8:24.
- 9:5 See note at 8:24.
- 9:7 We don't know where this pool was located.
- 9:13 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 9:14 See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- 9:18 See note at 1:19a.
- 9:22 See note at Matthew 1:1
- 9:38 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 10:2 Most of the shepherds in Israel had very small flocks. For this reason all the shepherds in an area would build a common sheep-pen (fold), and each night they would all bring their little flocks and put them in this common pen. Then they would take turns standing guard at the gate. Early in the morning, long before it was light, each one of the shepherds would come to the pen and go in through the gate to get his flock.
- 10:7 In most of the pens there was no real door or gate, just a narrow opening. And when all the shepherds brought their sheep into the pen, they took turns during the night sitting in this opening. And while they did so, they were the gate or door.
- 10:19 See note at 1:19a.
- 10:22 The Rededication (or Renewal) Festival (the modern Hanukkah) was the fourth of the great Jewish festivals. It was celebrated for 8 days, beginning on the 25th day of Kislev

(in December). It commemorated the cleaning and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C. by the Maccabees, after the Emperor Antiochus Epiphanes had made it unclean by using its altar to offer sacrifices to heathen gods. It was also called the Festival of Lights, because a special lampstand with 8 lamps was used, one lamp being lit every evening for the 8 days. Today this festival is called Hanukkah, which is celebrated at our Christmas time.

- 10:23 See picture on page 63 and the note at Matthew 21:12.
- 10:24 See note at 1:19a.
- 10:40 See map opposite page 1.
- 11:1a " " " " ".
- b See Luke 10:38-42.
- 11:8 See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 11:25 See note at 8:24.
- 11:28 This is the Greek word for "Rabbi". Compare note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 11:44 For more details on the Jews' burial practice, see 19:39-40 and note at Mark 16:1b.
- 11:45 See note at 1:19a.
- 11:46 See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 11:47 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 11:48 The Hebrew word used here is usually translated our "place", meaning our place to live. Compare Jeremiah 7:7, where this is explained as meaning our land, and see also Acts 7:7b.
- 11:49 See note at Matthew 26:3d.
- 11:51 See note at Luke 1:67.
- 11:55 Among the Jews a person couldn't take part in the festival sacrifices unless he was "clean", so far as the Law was concerned. And if during the period of 4-5 months, or longer, since he had been to the Temple for

the last festival, someone in his house had died, or if he had come within 10 feet of any "gentile" (non-Jew), he was "unclean". There were also many other things that would make one unclean. Therefore a large majority of the people who went to celebrate any festival would be unclean, and they would all have to go to Jerusalem some time before the festival began to make themselves clean by offering the proper sacrifices over at least an 8-day period.

- 11:56 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 12:2 Luke 10:38-42 tells about another time when Jesus had dinner at Lazarus' house. See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- 12:3 See note at Mark 14:3.
- 12:5 See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.
- 12:7 See note at Mark 16:1b.
- 12:23 See note at Matthew 8:20.
- 12:34 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 12:42 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 12:44 See 5:23.
- 12:46a See 3:19 and 8:12.
- b See 12:35.
- 12:47 See 3:17.
- 12:48 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 12:49 See 7:16.
- 12:50 See 8:26.
- 13:1 See note at Matthew 26:2a. -
- 13:2a See picture and note at Matthew 26:20.
- b See note at Matthew 26:14.
- 13:3 See Matthew 28:18b.
- 13:19 See note at 8:24.
- 13:23a See picture and note at Matthew 26:20. The

one who was lying closest to Jesus was at His left (right as we look at the picture). See note at Matthew 23:6a.

13:23b This is John's way of identifying himself. See note at 1:41 and note at Mark 14:52.

13:33 See 7:33-34 and 8:21.

14:6 See Note at 8:24.

14:17 See note at 7:7.

14:20 See note at 15:5.

14:22 See Luke 6:16.

14:27 The last sentence of this verse gives a definition of what the Jews meant by "peace".

14:31 The fact that Jesus told them to get up, because they had somewhere else to go, doesn't mean that they left the house right away. Because John doesn't say they left the house until 18:1. Jesus must have meant that since the dinner was finished, they could sit up or stand up, which would be much more comfortable, because He still had much to tell them (chapters 15-17).

15:1 See note at 8:24.

15:5 This thought that every believer is "in Christ" and He is "in us" is found often in the writings of John and Paul. See 14:20, 17:21-23, Romans 8:9-10, 12:4-5, I Corinthians 12:12-13 as examples. Jesus lives in us through His Word, for He is the Word. But we are also united with Christ (and the whole Triune God), when we are baptized (see Romans 6:3-4, and also when we come to believe in Him, if we have not been baptized as infants. And He continues to live in our hearts through faith. In the same way God the Father is in us and we are in Him (John 17:21). And the Holy Spirit is also in us, and we in Him. (1 Corinthians 3:16 & 6:19).

15:20 See 13:16 and compare Matthew 10:24.

- 16:33 See note at 14:27.
- 17:3 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 17:6 See note at 7:7.
- 17:21-23 This is a full discussion of the mystical union discussed in 15:5. See verse 26 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.
- 17:26 See note at 15:5.
- 18:5 See note at Matthew 2:23b.
- 18:9 See 17:6 and 9.
- 18:13 Annas was appointed Head Priest by the Romans in 6 A.D., and became extremely wealthy as a result. He was fired by the Romans in 15 A.D. But he continued to be the most powerful man in Israel for many years, since he managed to keep the Head Priest's office within his own family. All 5 of his sons served a few years each, and then Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was appointed and served for 18 years, also taking his orders from Annas. See the map on page 135 for the location of Annas' palace.
- 18:14 See 11:49-51. For more on Caiaphas, see note at Matthew 26:3d.
- 18:15 This other man was John, of course. See 1:41 13:23, and the note at Mark 14:52.
- 18:20a See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- b See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 18:24 See note at Matthew 26:3d.
- 18:28a The Roman governors were also the judges in their provinces. And they usually set up their court outside in the courtyard which the Romans called the praetorium. See map on page 135.
- b See notes at Acts 10:28 and Matthew 15:2. And since the Passover had already started, they wouldn't be able to eat any

more meals, since there wouldn't be time to make themselves "clean" again. See note at 11:55.

- c The main Passover meal, of course, had already been eaten the night before. But they were talking here about the Passover Chagigah sacrifice, which was eaten on the first day of the Passover festival.

18:29 See note at Matthew 27:2.

18:32 See Matthew 20:19, John 3:14 and 12:32.

19:13a See note at Matthew 27:19.

- b Gabbatha means "a rounded mound". This Pavement was just outside the governor's palace in the agora (see map on page 135).

19:14 See note at Matthew 27:62.

19:19 See note at Matthew 2:23b.

19:20 See note at 5:2b.

19:24 See picture and note at Matthew 27:35.

19:26 See 13:23b, 18:15 & notes at 1:41 & Mark 14:52.

19:31a This would bring about their death very quickly, since it would make it impossible for them to breathe.

- b It was Saturday of the Passover week.

19:34 See note at 1 John 5:6b.

19:35 See note at 19:26 (above).

19:38 See note at 1:19a.

19:39a See 3:1-17.

- b See note at Mark 15:23.

- c Aloes was the powdered bark of a tree found in India which had a very sweet, perfumy smell. It was also used in making incense, and was burned in a home to remove the terrible smell of a dead body. This was also smeared on a dead body to hide the smell of the decaying flesh. See note at Mark 16:1b.

- 19:42 See note at Matthew 27:62a, and remember that it could hardly have been much earlier than 5:00 p.m. when they took the body down, and they had to be done by 6:00 p.m., when it would be Saturday.
- 20:1 See Matthew 28:2.
- 20:2-9 This incident almost certainly identifies "the follower whom Jesus loved" as the apostle John. See also verses 3-9 (next two paragraphs), 1:41, 13:23, 18:15, 19:26 and the note at Mark 14:52.
- 20:12 Mary was one of the women who had watched Joseph and Nicodemus put Jesus' body in the cave, and they knew exactly where the body had been placed. See Luke 23:55.
- 20:16 See note at 5:2b.
- 20:19 The Greek phrase used here translates the Hebrew "peace be to you!" repeated in vss 21 and 26. See note at Matthew 10:13.
- 21:1 See note at 6:1.
- 21:7 See note at 20:2, and all the other verses listed there.
- 21:9 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- 21:15 See Matthew 26:31-33.
- 21:17 See 18:15-17 and 25:27 for Peter's three denials that he knew Jesus. Notice that here Jesus asked Peter twice, "Do you love me?" and a third time, "Are you my friend?" This told Peter that Jesus knew that he had denied knowing Him 3 times, and that Jesus was perhaps wondering if Peter was his friend any longer. And this was why he now had such a terrible pain in his heart.
- 21:19 The "stretch out your hands" and "where you don't want to go" (vs 18) pointed to the fact that Peter would also be crucified, which he was, by Nero in 66 or 67.

21:20a See 21:7 and note at 20:2-9, and all verses listed there.

b See 13:23-25.

21:23 See 20:2 and the note there.

Appendix See note at 7:52b.

The ACTS of Jesus working through His apostles.

1:4 See Luke 24:49.

1:5 See Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16.

1:9 See Luke 24:51.

1:10 Compare Luke 1:11

1:11 See Matthew 24:30, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 and Revelation 1:7.

1:12 The rabbis said that Numbers 35:5 means that a person could go no farther than 2,000 cubits on Saturday. This would be 3,000 feet, or about 5/8 mile (5 long city blocks). See the map on page 135 to locate Mt. Olive.

1:13 This was probably the house of John Mark's parents, the same house where Jesus and the 12 ate the Last Supper. Mark wrote the second gospel. See 12:12 and Luke 22:7-13.

1:14 See Mark 6:3 for the names of Jesus' four half brothers. We know nothing of sisters.

1:16 See Psalm 41:9.

1:18 See Matthew 26:14-16.

1:26 See picture and note at Matthew 27:35.

2:1 "Pentecost" means "the fiftieth". Among the Jews the Festival of the 50th Day (also called the Festival of Weeks, because it was seven sevens), was a spring harvest festival, celebrated 50 days after the Sunday after the Passover Saturday. It fell between the middle of May and the 10th of June.

2:11 See map on page 332 for all these places.

2:17a "The last days" (Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1), or "the latter days" (Ezekiel 38:6, Daniel 2:28 Hosea 3:5), or "afterward" (Joel 2:28) all mean the same thing. This was how the Old Testament prophets described the period of the Messiah's Kingdom here on earth. And in the New Testament the same kind of words are used here in Acts 2:17, quoting Joel 2:28, And in 2 Timothy 3:1, James 5:3, 1 Peter 1:5 2 Peter 3:3, 1 John 2:18 and Judas 18, all meaning this same period of time - the period between Jesus' birth and His return for Judgment. We speak of this as the Gospel Age in which we bring the Good News to all nations.

Often, however the Old Testament prophets spoke of "the Lord's Day" (Isaiah 2:12, 3:18 13:6, Jeremiah 46:10, Ezekiel 30:3, etc.) or simply "that Day" (Isaiah 2:11, 3:7, 4:1-2) to speak specifically of the Day of Jesus' return in glory to raise all the dead back to life and judge them all. And the New Testament writers also speak of "the Lord's Day" (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10), "Christ's Day" (2 Thessalonians 2:2), "God's Day" (2 Thessalonians 3:12), "the Day of Judgment" (2 Peter 2:9 and 3:7, 1 John 4:17), "the Day of Visitation" (1 Peter 2:12), or simply "that Day" (2 Thessalonians 1:10 and 2 Timothy 1:12), or "the Last Day" (John 6:-39-40, 7:24 and 12:48) to name specifically that last Day on which this whole world will be destroyed, followed by the Judgment. So we must keep in mind that "the last Days", speaking of a very long period of time, and "the last Day", speaking of one day, must not be confused.

b See note at Luke 1:67.

2:22 See note at Matthew 2:23b.

- 2:26 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 2:30a See note at Matthew 5:33.
- b See note at Matthew 1:1.
- c See 2 Samuel 7:12-13 and note b above.
- 2:42 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 2:46 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 3:2a The Beautiful gate was on the east side of the wall that surrounded the Priests' and Women's courts. It led into the Women's court (see note at Matthew 21:12), and was the most beautiful gate in the Templeyard.
- b Everyone who had sacrifices to offer had to go through the Women's court, which was a small open-air yard right in front of the Temple building and the great altar. This was as close to the Temple as the women were allowed to go. Their court was surrounded by a five foot wall and had three gates, on the north, east and south sides, of which the Beautiful gate on the east was the most expensively decorated.
- 3:6 See note at Matthew 2:23b.
- 3:11 See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 3:13 See Exodus 3:6 and 15.
- 3:25 See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 3:26 See Isaiah 42:1-2.
- 4:1 See note at Matthew 3:7b.
- 4:2 See Matthew 22:23-32.
- 4:5a See note at Matthew 5:22.
- b See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 4:6 See note at John 18:13.
- 4:10 See note at Matthew 2:23b.
- 4:25 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 4:26 See note at Matthew 1:1.

- 4:27a See note at Matthew 14:1.
b See note at Matthew 27:2.
c Anointing was a special ceremony among the Jews. Some oil was poured over a man's head when he was to be installed into some important office, like a king, or prophet, or priest. This was God's command, and it meant that God had chosen that person to be His servant. See also the note at Matthew 1:1.
- 5:12 See picture on page 63, and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 5:17 See note at Matthew 3:7b.
- 5:20 This is Eternal Life, which Jesus gives us.
- 5:21 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 5:34a See note at Matthew 3:7a.
b See note at Matthew 8:19b.
- 5:42 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 6:1a Since the conquests of Alexander the Great in 335-331 B.C., almost everyone in the Mediterranean world and the near East spoke some Greek, and in Jesus' times it was the international language.
b See note at John 5:2b.
- 6:9a See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
b Cyrene was city in Libya, Africa. See map on page 332. Alexandria was the principal city in Egypt.
- 6:12a See Note at Matthew 2:4.
b The Sanhedrin was the official name of the great Council of Israel. See Matthew 5:22.
- 6:14a See note at Matthew 2:23b.
b See John 2:19.
- 7:8a See note at Luke 1:59.
b See note at Matthew 26:28.
c The word used here is "patriarch", which means the head, or beginning father. This

special title was given to the 12 sons of Jacob, each of whom became the head, or father of a whole tribe of people.

7:17 See verses 6-7.

7:35 See verse 27 and Exodus 2:14.

7:38 This message was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and is found in Exodus 20 through Leviticus 27, and parts of Numbers.

7:47 See 2 Samuel 7:1-17, especially vss 12:13, and 1 Kings 5-6. Compare Exodus 25:8 and Numbers 2:2, 1 Peter 2:4-6.

7:56 See note at Matthew 8:20.

7:60 See note at Matthew 9:24.

8:1b See 1:8b.

8:5a See 6:5b.

b See note at Matthew 1:1.

8:16 See Matthew 28:19. We must be baptized into the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

8:26 See map opposite page 1.

8:40 Philip probably made Caesarea his home from this time on (see 21:8). See map opposite page 1.

9:2a See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

b See map opposite page 1.

c See note at Matthew 21:32.

9:13 See note at Matthew 27:52.

9:15 See note at Matthew 6:32.

9:22 See note at Matthew 1:1.

9:26 After Saul left Damascus, he spent between two and three years in Arabia (see map on page 332). See also Galatians 1:17-18.

9:27 See 4:36-37.

9:29 See 6:1a and the note there.

9:32a See map opposite page 1.

b See note at Matthew 27:52.

- 9:33 See picture and note at Mark 2:4.
- 9:36 See map opposite page 1.
- 10:1a " " " " " ".
- b In Latin, the language of Rome, this man was called a "centurion", meaning the commander of a century, a group of 100 men. This was the basic unit of the Roman army. Sixty centuries made up a legion, or regiment.
- 10:2 In every city of the world at that time there were foreigners (gentiles, or non-Jews) who were attracted to the Jewish faith and religion because of its high moral standards. A number of these foreigners attended services in the Jewish meeting houses regularly and heard the Bible read and explained. In this way they learned about the true, Triune God of the Bible, and many of them came to believe in Him and joined in the worship, even though they never became members, who had to follow the whole Jewish religion and live like Jews. This "in between" group of foreigners were called "God-fearers" by the Jews. They shared the Jews' faith, but not all of their practices.
- 10:10 See Revelation 1:10 and 4:1.
- 10:14 A part of the Law God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai commanded them not to eat certain kinds of meat, like pigs and wild animals and birds. So the Jews called such foods "unclean". See Leviticus 11:3-4, 9-10 and 13-23.
- 10:22 See note at 10:2.
- 10:25 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 10:28 All through the Old Testament God warned the Jews not to have anything to do with the heathen people who were living in and around their land of Canaan, and especially not to intermarry with them. The reason was that they were unbelievers and idolaters, and that this would lead the Israelites into idolatry

too. In Jesus' and Paul's day this same rule was followed by the Jews, but in the Tradition of the Elders the rabbis had made more specific rules (see Matthew 15:2), that a Jew must not be a friend of a foreigner or go into his house.

10:35 See note at 10:2.

10:38 See note at Matthew 1:1.

10:45 Jesus' Jewish followers were so surprised at this because the Jews had always believed that they alone were God's chosen nation (see Exodus 19:1-6). So if any non-Jew wanted to become a member of that chosen nation, he must become a Jew and be circumcised, and then live as a Jew, obeying all the laws and commandments God had given the Jews. But only a few foreigners had gone that far, and still God was treating them just as if they were Jews. See note at 15:1.

10:48 See Romans 6:3-4 and the note at John 15:5.

11:2 Read 10:28 and the note there. This question of the circumcision of the non-Jews came up later and became a great cause of division in the Church, because there were many Jews in the new church who believed that the Tradition of the Elders was a law that still had to be kept by all Christians, also non-Jews.

11:3 Circumcision was the special mark which identified a person as a Jew, a member of God's chosen nation of Israel, and a believer in the one true God (See note at Luke 1:59). Therefore an uncircumcised person was an unbeliever who was "unclean" and must be avoided completely. And since eating with a person in his home was the closest act of friendship in the ancient world, no Jew would ever think of doing such a thing. See Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 15:1-2 and the note there.

11:16 See Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8 and Luke 3:16.

11:19a See 8:1-4.

b See map on page 368. Antioch was the largest city on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and it became the headquarters for the great missionary expansion into Europe. See chapters 13-28. Phoenicia is on the map opposite page 1.

11:20a See map on page 332.

b Cyrene was a city in Libya. See page 332.

11:22 See 4:36-37 and 9:27.

11:26 Saul, who used his Roman name Paul for his later travels, had studied to be a rabbi for many years under Gamaliel, who was one of the most famous of all the rabbis (see 5:34). Therefore Saul had a very thorough knowledge of the whole Old Testament, which was the Bible in those days. And he had been trained to be a rabbi. See note at Matthew 8:19b. But besides his earlier training, Jesus also taught Saul all that he had to know as a believer while Saul was somewhere in Arabia for two or three years (see Galatians 1:17-18). So Saul received the same training the other apostles had during their 2½ years with Jesus (see Mark 1:14-20).

11:27 The Old Testament definition of a "prophet" was a man who spoke for God. And God continued to raise up men to speak for Him in the early days of the New Testament church. See 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11.

11:28 Claudius ruled as the Roman Emperor from 41 to 54 A.D.

12:1 This Herod was Agrippa I. He was the son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great (Matthew 2:1), and a nephew of Antipas (Matthew 14:1). Agrippa I became the "king" of Galilee, formerly ruled by his uncle Antipas, and Iturea and Trachonitis, formerly ruled by another uncle, Philip, and Abilene, for-

merly ruled by Lysanius (see Luke 3:1), as well as Samaria and Judea.

12:3 See note at Matthew 26:17.

12:12 See note at 1:13.

12:17 This James was Jesus' brother (Mark 6:3). He had come to believe that Jesus was the promised Savior when Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7). Soon after that he was elected president of the church in Jerusalem (see 1:14, 15:13, and Galatians 2:9).

12:19 This was the usual punishment when a prisoner escaped.

12:21 See note at Matthew 27:19.

12:23 Herod Agrippa's death is the first event in the book of Acts which can be dated by other records. Roman records say he died in 44.

12:25 It was probably about this time, between 45 and 50, that Jesus' brother James (see note at 12:17), who was president of the church in Jerusalem, wrote his letter to the Jews in other parts of the world, about the same time as Matthew wrote his gospel.

13:1 Title For all the places mentioned on this trip, see map on page 368.

13:1a See note at Luke 1:67.

b The teachers in the Christian churches were not nearly as well educated as the Jewish rabbis (see note at Matthew 8:19b). But they were trained by the apostles, and later the older teachers, so that they could explain all the important Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, and all the things Jesus told His apostles. But Saul was a fully trained rabbi, the only one we know of in the early church.

13:5 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

13:6a Bar-Jesus is an Aramaic (Jewish) name which

means "the son of Jesus".

13:6b See note at Matthew 2:1, and compare chapter 8:9-11.

13:8 Luke is saying that in Hebrew Elymas meant "rabbi", which meant "the great one", because the rabbis had studied the Bible for so many years and knew so much. The Persia magoi were the same kind of men. They had studied every subject, so that they really were well educated and knew almost everything there was to know.

13:13 See map on page 368.

13:14 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

13:16 See note at 10:2.

13:23 See 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

13:25a See note at Matthew 1:1.

b See John 1:27.

13:27 See note at Matthew 12:1b.

13:36 See note at Matthew 9:24.

13:38 See note at Romans 1:17.

13:46 See note at Matthew 6:32.

13:51 See picture and note at Matthew 10:14.

14:1 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

14:2 See note at Matthew 6:32.

14:22 See John 16:33.

14:23 See note at Matthew 6:16.

14:27 See note at Matthew 6:32.

15:1 See note on circumcision at Luke 1:59. In time, however, the spiritual meaning of circumcision was forgotten, and it became just a physical "sign" that the individual was a member of Abraham's family, the nation of Israel. So the later Jews misunderstood the whole covenant, and took it to mean that only Jews could be saved. This was the belief of the Pharisees, that only

those who were circumcised could be saved. Thus they turned a sign of faith into a legal requirement for salvation. And at this time there was a small, powerful group of former Pharisees in the church at Jerusalem.

15:3 See note at Matthew 6:32.

15:5a See note at Matthew 3:7a.

b See note at verse 1.

15:11 See 10:1-48.

15:13 See note at 12:17.

15:16 Here the word "tent" was a Hebrew way of talking about a kingdom.

15:21 See picture and note at Mark3:1.

15:32 See note at 11:27.

15:35a See note at Matthew 4:23.

b It was during this time that Paul received the news that some of the Pharisaic Jews were telling the believers in Lystra and Derbe that they must be circumcised. So Paul immediately sent off a hot letter to those people. Since these cities were located in the Roman province of Galatia, we call this letter "Galatians".

15:36 Title For the places named on this trip, see map on page 368.

15:41 Syria was the province in which Antioch was located, and Cilicia was the province where Tarsus, Paul's home town, was located.

16:3 See note at Luke 1:59. As chapter 15 showed clearly, this wasn't necessary. But Paul did this so that the Pharisaic Jews wouldn't have any reason to criticize him and Timothy and cause any trouble which would affect their work.

- 16:4 See 15:23-29.
- 16:6 See map on page 332.
- 16:10 The sudden change from third person (he and they) to first person (we) makes it clear that it was here in Troas that Luke joined Paul's group. Perhaps the Holy Spirit gave Paul a "picture" of Luke in the dream the night before, so that he knew who he was looking for the next day.
- 16:13a See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- b The name of the river was the Gangites.
- 16:14 See note at 10:2.
- 16:17 See note at Matthew 21:32.
- 16:19 See note at Matthew 11:16.
- 16:20 In Roman colonies, which were frontier towns there were two governors who shared the oversight of the area. One was a military governor and the other was a civilian.
- 16:27 See note at 12:19.
- 16:37 Only a few people in the Roman empire were actually Roman citizens, and those who were enjoyed several valuable privileges not shared by the others. They were exempt from most taxes, and also from forced military service (the draft). They were also protected against false arrest and police brutality. In those days all suspects were examined or questioned by using the "third degree", which meant that they were whipped or beaten with rods during the questioning, which brought many "confessions". But citizens were protected from such brutal methods. They also could not be put in chains or jail unless they had been given a fair trial and were found guilty of some crime.
- 16:40 Notice the change from "we" to "they" here. This tells us that Luke stayed behind in Philippi to take care of the work there while the others continued their travels.

- 17:1a See map at page 368.
- b In order to have a meeting house there had to be at least ten Jewish families living in the town or area, since the congregation had to have ten elders (see note at Mark 3:1). This is why there was no meeting house in Philippi, Amphipolis or Apollonia. But Thessalonica was a fairly large city.
- 17:2 See note at Matthew 12:1b.
- 17:3 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 17:4a The only ones we know about were Aristarchus and Secundas. See 20:4 and 27:2.
- b See note at 10:2.
- 17:10 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 17:17a See note at 10:2.
- b See note at Matthew 11:16.
- 17:18 It is clear that they thought that "resurrection (Greek, Anastasis) was the name of a female goddess, since it is sometimes used as a personal name.
- 17:19 The city council of Athens consisted of 12 men. One of their duties was the supervision of education. Therefore all new lecturers and religions and religious ideas had to be presented to this council to be sure they were not injurious to the others, or dangerous to the city. Because of this, Mars Hill was the favorite meeting place for the people of Athens, who loved to listen to all such new ideas (see verse 21).
- 17:24 See 7:47 and the note there.
- 17:28 This is a quotation from the Cretan poet Aratus in his *Phaenomena*.
- 17:31 See note at 2:17a.
- 18:2 This order is mentioned by the Roman historian Suetonius. It was probably given towards the end of the year 50, so that Aquila and Priscilla probably arrived in Corinth late

that year, or early in 51.

18:3 In those days every rabbi was also taught a trade, so that he could always support himself and his family in case he was out of work or in some new city. So Paul had been trained to be a tentmaker.

18:4a See note at Matthew 12:1b.

b See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

c When Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul in Corinth, they brought the latest news of the work in Macedonia and Thessaly, including some disturbing news from Thessalonica which prompted Paul to write an immediate letter (1 Thessalonians), and then a short while later, another letter (2 Thessalonians. See verse 8).

18:5 See note at Matthew 1:1.

18:6a See picture and note at Matthew 10:14.

b See note at Matthew 6:32.

18:7 See note at 10:2.

18:8 See note at verse 4c.

18:12a Gallio served as the proconsul of Achaia (Greece) from July 52 to July 53. From this date and the one at 12:23 we can make a fairly accurate history for the book of Acts. Paul must have arrived there in the fall of 51 and stayed there until the spring of 53.

b See note at Matthew 27:19.

18:19 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.

18:22 Title For the places mentioned on this trip see map on page 368.

18:23 The provinces of Galatia and Phrygia are shown on the map on page 332.

18:24 Alexandria was the center of learning in the world at that time.

18:25 See note at Matthew 21:32.

- 19:3 See 18:24-25.
- 19:5 See Romans 6:3-4 and note at John 15:5
- 19:19 See picture and note at Luke 4:17. Books worth 50,000 drachmas would be a big pile!
- 19:22 It was at this time, in the fall of 55, that Paul wrote his first letter to the Christians in Corinth. Erastus was probably the one who carried the letter to Corinth. See also 1 Corinthians 16:10-11.
- 19:24 This was one of the largest and most famous temples in the Greek world, and it brought thousands of visitors and pilgrims to Ephesus.
- 20:1 It was at this time, in the fall of 56, just before he left Ephesus to go to Macedonia, that Paul learned that the troubles in Corinth had not been settled. So he sat down and wrote another hot letter, but the first part of it has been lost, and all we have of it is 2 Corinthians 10-13. See the note at 2 Corinthians 10:1.
- 20:2 After Paul arrived in Macedonia, Titus returned with the good news that Paul's hot letter had had its proper effect, and the troublemakers had repented or had been disciplined. So now he decided to go to Corinth to tell them how happy he was. But first he wrote another letter to express his joy - 2 Corinthians 1-9. The last part of this letter has also been lost. Read the note at 2 Corinthians 10:1.
- 20:3 It was probably during Paul's stay in Corinth, in late 56 or early 57, that Paul wrote his letter to the Christians in Rome.
- 20:5 Here the writer again changes from "he" and "they" to "us" and "we", which tells us that after 6 years Luke rejoined Paul again when Paul came to Philippi (see note at 16:40).
- 20:6 See note at Matthew 26:17.

20:11 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.

20:16 See note at 2:1.

20:24 See 1 Corinthians 9:24-26 and 2 Timothy 4:7.

20:35 This is one of Jesus' sayings that is not recorded in the four gospels.

21:8 See 6:1-6.

21:9 See note at 11:27.

21:11a This is the same usage of the word "Jews" that is in John's gospel (see John 1:19a).

b See note at Matthew 6:32.

21:18 See note at 12:17.

21:24a See note at John 11:55.

b Each man had made a promise to sacrifice 2 pigeons and a lamb at the end of the time; and the lamb especially would be very expensive. Paul apparently had some money. And paying their expenses would be a very generous act, and would show other Jews that he wanted to help others keep the Law.

c The shaving of their heads marked the end of the 30-day period of the promise and showed that they had nothing more to do.

21:25 See 15:28-29 for the letter.

21:26a See the map of the Templeyard on page 63. Paul would have to go to the gate between the Women's court and the Priest's court to talk to the priests.

b After they had made themselves "clean", they had to wait for seven days (the period of cleansing) before the final sacrifices could be offered, and Paul had to make these arrangements.

21:28 Foreigners were allowed in the big outer part of the Templeyard, called "the For-

eigners' Court", but not in the inner parts, close to the Temple itself. Only Jews were allowed in the Women's court. See the plan of the Templeyard on page 63.

21:29 See note above.

21:34 At the northwest corner of the Templeyard (see map, page 135), on the highest point in the city stood a large fortress, called Antonia, which Herod the Great rebuilt. And the Roman soldiers stationed there were to keep order in the city.

21:38 The "dagger-men" (sicarii) were a fanatical group of Jewish patriots and terrorists who believed that the Jews must use violence to overthrow the Romans. They carried short daggers under their cloaks and assassinated Roman officials, soldiers and sympathizers whenever they had the chance. Nine years later, in 66, this group succeeded in leading the whole Jewish nation into a revolt against Rome. But the final result was the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Templeyard, and the end of the Jewish state (see Matthew 24:1-2 and 15-20).

21:40 See note at John 5:2b.

22:3 See 5:34 and the notes there.

22:4 See note at Matthew 21:32.

22:5a See note at Matthew 5:22.

b See 9:1-2.

22:8 See note at Matthew 2:23b.

22:17a There is a time gap of 3 years between the end of verse 16 and the "Then" in verse 17., and Paul talks about this gap in Galatians 1:15-18. But first read Acts 22:14, where Ananias told Paul that God had chosen him to "see the Man who is without sin (Jesus), and to hear Him speak to you personally." That meeting had to have occurred during the 3

years which Paul spent in Arabia and Damascus (Galatians 1:16b-18a), mostly in Arabia, where Jesus completed Paul's education.

- 22:17b See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- 22:18 See 9:26-30, which explains why Paul had to get away from Jerusalem.
- 22:20 See 7:58b-8:1.
- 22:21 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 22:25 See note at 16:37.
- 23:3 Paul was accusing Ananias of being a hypocrite, a two-faced pretender, posing as a lawful, honest judge, but acting in an unlawful way. He did so by referring to the Jewish practice of concealing the fact that a wall or a house was in such bad condition that it was about ready to fall down by giving it a coat of whitewash, and making it appear to be in good condition.
- 23:6a See note at Matthew 3:7b.
- b See note at Matthew 3:7a.
- 23:9 See note at Matthew 2:4.
- 23:14 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 23:20 This is the same use of the word "Jews" as in John's gospel. See note at John 1:19a.
- 24:5 See note at Matthew 2:23b.
- 24:14 See note at Matthew 21:32.
- 24:18a See picture on page 63 and note at Matthew 21:12.
- b See note at John 11:55.
- 24:20 See note at Matthew 5:22.
- 24:25 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 25:6 See note at Matthew 27:19.
- 25:11 Every Roman citizen had the right to have his case brought before the Emperor himself,

just as any American citizen can appeal his case to the Supreme Court. To understand this appeal we must remember that Paul had already decided that his next trip should be to Rome, and then Spain (see Romans 15:22-29). And since the governors in Caesarea didn't seem to be in any hurry to set Paul free, he no doubt felt this would be the quickest and easiest way to get to Rome.

25:13 This man was better known as King Herod Agrippa II. He was a great grandson of Herod the Great (see note at Luke 1:5) and the son of Agrippa I (see note at 12:1). The Emperor Claudius made Agrippa "king" over all the land east and north of Lake Galilee, formerly known as the Decapolis, Abilene and Chalcis during the years before 50. Bernice was his sister. He died in 100.

25:15 See note at Matthew 5:22.

25:17 See note at Matthew 27:19.

26:5 See note at Matthew 3:7a.

26:9 See note at Matthew 2:23b.

26:10a See note at Matthew 27:52.

b See note at Matthew 3:7b.

26:11 The meeting houses were used for all kinds of meetings besides their worship services. As indicated here, they were the courtrooms where the "people's courts" held their trials. These were the lower courts, which handled all sorts of local matters, including matters of their religious laws and heresy trials. See Matthew 10:17, Mark 13:9, Luke 21:12, etc.

26:14 See note at John 5:2b.

26:17 See note at Matthew 6:32.

26:18 See Revelation 21:26-27.

26:23a See note at Matthew 1:1.

- 26:23b See Isaiah 42:6b and 49:6b. Compare vs 18 and John 8:12.
- 27:1 Title For all the places mentioned in chapter 27, see map on page 368.
- b Notice the "we" here, which tells us that Luke joined Paul on this last trip to Rome.
- 27:5 Cilicia was the province in which Tarsus, Paul's home town, was located, and Pamphylia was just west of Cilicia, in the part of Asia Minor which dips down to the Mediterranean. You can find Lycia and Pamphylia on the map on page 332.
- 27:9 For the Jews the fall festival was the Day of Atonement and the Tent Festival, which was celebrated around the end of September or the first of October. Thus at this time it must have been October.
- 27:16 In those days the lifeboat was towed along behind the ship at the end of a long rope.
- 27:27 The Adriatic was the name used by the sailors in those days for the middle part of the Mediterranean, from Greece to Italy.
- 27:35 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.
- 27:42 See note at 12:19.
- 28:9 Luke, who wrote this book, was also a physician (Colossians 4:14). So in verse 10 he says "they thanked us."
- 28:11 In those days the ships were identified by the figurehead on the front of the ship. This ship had a carving of Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Zeus. They were said to be the protectors of ships and sailors.
- 28:15a The Appian Market was in the small village of Appius, about 40 miles south of Rome.
- b The Three Taverns was a travellers station on the Appian Road, about 10 miles north of Appius and 30 miles from Rome.

- 28:20 Israel's hope, of course, was the coming of their Messiah. See the note at Matthew 1:1.
- 28:22 The "group" mentioned here were those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
- 28:28 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 28:31 During these two years of imprisonment Paul wrote these four letters.

Romans

Title See note at Acts 20:3.

1:1 See notes at Matthew 10:2 & 1 Corinthians 4:9.

1:2 When Paul spoke about the Bible, he meant the Old Testament, since there was no New Testament then. And the Old Testament is simply the story of the Savior promised to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15. All through Genesis and in all the other Old Testament books God expanded and developed this promise by giving more and more information about this Savior, and making more promises about Him. See the note at Matthew 1:1.

1:3 That Jesus would be born into David's family is one of the many prophecies about Him in the Old Testament. It is also one of the most important promises. See also 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and Matthew 1:6

1:5 See note at Matthew 6:32.

1:7a See note at Matthew 27:52.

b See note at John 14:27.

1:17 Here we have a very important biblical word, usually translated "righteous". We think of a righteous person as one who always does what is right. And as Paul says later on, there is no human being who is really righteous. Only Jesus can be called righteous in this full sense. But because He kept the Law perfectly for us, and paid for all our sins,

we really are perfectly holy in God's sight right now, because we believe that all our sins are gone, which is the truth. See also Acts 13:38-39.

1:27 See Ephesians 4:17-19.

2:5 See note at Acts 2:17a.

2:13 See note at 1:17.

2:24 See Isaiah 52:5 and Ezekiel 36:20.

2:25 See note at Luke 1:59.

2:29a Here Paul is using the word "Jew" to mean a true son of Abraham, a believer in Christ. See note at 9:6.

b See Deuteronomy 30:6 and Colossians 2:11.

3:9 See 2:1-3, 12, 17-29.

3:10 See note at 1:17.

3:12 See Psalm 14:1-3.

3:13a See Psalm 5:9.

b Here Paul is speaking about an asp, a small, but very poisonous snake.

3:19 The word "law" (Hebrew, Torah) was very important to the Jews. The basic meaning of the word is "instruction", from an Aramaic word meaning to teach. Paul, who was a rabbi used the word in three ways, to mean 1) a special commandment of God, or body of commandments; 2) the five books of Moses, where most of the Jewish laws are found; and 3) all of God's instructions to men, which would be what we today call the "Bible". One must keep in mind these three meanings, and find the right one in each passage. Here it's a question whether Paul was pointing to the several Old Testament quotations found in verses 10-18, taken from the Psalms, Isaiah, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, or to the law as a body of commandments. It seems likely that the "law" in verse 20 refers to the Law as a body of God's commandments.

- 3:20 See note at 1:17.
- 3:21 The Jews divided the Old Testament into the Law, the five books of Moses (see 3:19), and the Prophets (all the other books).
- 3:24 See 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- 3:25a Paul's actual words here are "God has placed Jesus before our eyes as the mercy seat", referring to the gold cover on the top of the Agreement Box in Exodus 25:17. This cover had two angels at either end, and on the Day of Atonement each year the blood of the goat that was sacrificed for all the people was poured out on this cover to show the people that God couldn't see the broken Law in the box because of the blood on the cover, meaning that He couldn't see all their sins. And this meant that their sins for the whole year were forgiven. So Paul says that the mercy seat was a picture of Jesus and His blood, which has covered over all the sins of all people forever, and that Jesus is our mercy seat. So we translate that "God has placed Jesus before our eyes as the one who covers over all sins."
- b See note at 1:17.
- 3:27 Here Paul uses the word "law" in its basic and widest sense, to mean teaching. See note at 3:19 above (3rd sense).
- 3:29a See verses 1-2.
- b See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 4:11 See note at Luke 1:59.
- 4:13 See Genesis 12:2-3.
- 4:14 To find out what an "heir" is, read Galatians 4:1-7, especially vss 1 & 7, & Matt. 21:38.
- 4:17 See Genesis 1:3-27.
- 5:1 See note at John 14:27.
- 6:4 See chapter 8:9-11 and note at John 15:5.

- 6:19 See note at 7:18.
- 7:18 All through this letter and all his others Paul used the word "flesh" to describe our present sinful human nature which we all inherit from Adam and Eve. And the Bible tells us that this fallen nature is totally corrupted by sin. Jesus used the word in this same sense in Matthew 26:41. John also did the same thing in John 3:6 and 6:63. See also Romans 3:10-12, Genesis 6:5 and 8:21, Psalm 14:1-3 and Jeremiah 17:9.
- 7:20 See Galatians 5:16-18.
- 7:24 This is perhaps a reference to the cruel custom of the ancient Etruscan kings who punished criminals by tying them hand to hand and face to face to dead bodies and leaving them lie in this state until they themselves died.
- 8:1 See note at John 15:5.
- 8:3 See note at 7:18.
- 8:10 See chapter 6:4-8.
- 8:20 The history of the world shows clearly how true this is. Of the thousands of kingdoms and empires founded in the past, not a single one has survived for more than few hundred years; and every forward step is followed by two backward steps, so that the world is always getting worse and worse. See Matthew 24:12 and 21.
- 8:24 The word usually translated as "hope" in the New Testament is often translated as "faith" or "trust" in the Old Testament. In Acts 14:15 it is translated as "trust". Paul is not, however, denying that we are saved by faith. He is saying the same thing, and reminding us that hope also includes trust or faith in God.
- 8:27 See note at Matthew 27:52.

- 9:1 See note at John 15:5.
- 9:4 See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 9:5 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 9:6 This strange statement is explained in verse 8 and 11:25-36, especially 25-26. And we can see the truth of all this as we read the Old Testament, that the true Israel (believers in Christ) was always a tiny group in the nation of Israel. And this is the way it always is, and always has been in the New Testament church also. For the true Israel, who are God's people, are only those who believe in Jesus, and this has nothing to do with a person's nationality.
- 9:8a See John 3:6a.
- b See John 3:5 and 6b.
- 9:20 See Isaiah 29:16 and 45:9.
- 9:22 See verse 17.
- 9:24 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 9:30 See note at 1:17.
- 10:7 See note at Luke 8:31.
- 10:8 See Deuteronomy 30:12-14.
- 10:9 From the time of the Roman Emperor Caligula (37-41 A.D.) everyone in the Empire was required to make an annual confession before the authorities that "The Emperor is my Lord." This was no doubt strictly enforced in Rome. The Christians, however, had to say "Jesus is my Lord," giving Him the place of honor in their life. See 1 Peter 3:13-16. It was their refusal to call the Emperor "my Lord" that caused Christians to be tortured, imprisoned and killed, beginning with Nero's persecution in 64, and continuing until 310 A.D.
- 11:11 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 12:5 See note at John 15:5.

- 12:6-8 See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and Ephesians 4:11-13.
- 12:13 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 12:14 See Matthew 5:44.
- 13:11 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 13:14 See note at 7:18.
- 14:11 See Isaiah 45:23.
- 14:14a See notes at Acts 10:14 and Matthew 23:27.
- b See Acts 10:9-16.
- 14:15 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 14:17 See note at 1:17.
- 15:9 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 15:25 See 1 Corinthians 16:1-4,
 and 3 Corinthians 9:1-5.
- 15:26 See 3 Corinthians 8.
- 15:31 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 15:33 See note at John 14:27.
- 16:1 Some churches elected helpers for their pastors. But these people took care only of physical needs, supplying food, clothing, etc, to the poor and widows who had no families to do so. The first such helpers were elected in Jerusalem (see Acts 6:1-6).
- 16:3 See Acts 18:2-3 and 26.
- 16:18 See note at 7:18.
- 16:20a See note at John 14:27.
- b See 2 Thessalonians 3:17,

1 Corinthians

Title See note at Acts 19:22.

- 1:1 Sosthenes was the president of the Jewish synagogue in Corinth after Paul left town (Acts 18:17). Later he must have become a believer, and went to see Paul, who was li-

ving in Ephesus at the time, to talk about the problems they were having in Corinth.

- 1:2 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 1:3 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:8 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 1:11 Compare what Paul says here with 11:17-19.
- 1:12 For information about Apollos, read Acts 18:24-28.
- 1:18 See Matthew 7:13.
- 1:23a See note at Matthew 1:1.
- b See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 1:30 See note at John 15:5.
- 3:1 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 3:13 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 3:16 See Romans 8:9-11.
- 3:19 See 1:20-21.
- 4:9 See note at Matthew 10:2. In Paul's letters, where he uses this word of himself, he is emphasizing the fact that he has been sent out by the Lord Jesus as one of His apostles, since Paul was called later than the others. See Acts 9:1-6 and 15.
- 4:12 See Matthew 5:44.
- 4:15 See note at Galatians 3:24.
- 4:21 See note at 13:1.
- 5:1 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 5:5a See note at Romans 7:18.
- b See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 5:9 This letter was really Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth, but it was apparently lost or destroyed. All we know about it is what Paul tells us about it here.
- 5:11 Among the ancient Jews eating with a person was one of the closest kinds of social relationship or acts of friendship. One ate only

with his very good friends. But a true Christian could never consider any person described here in verse 11 as his friend!

6:1 See note at Matthew 27:52.

6:2 See Matthew 19:28.

6:12 See 10:23.

6:15 See Matthew 19:5-6 and note at John 15:5.

6:19 See 3:16 and note at John 15:5.

6:20 See 7:23, Galatians 3:13 and 1 Peter 1:18-19..

7:7 For this whole chapter see Matthew 19:10-12.

7:23 See 6:20, Galatians 3:13 & 1 Peter 1:18-19.

7:36 That is, if the girl was past 20. Among both the Greeks and Jews the marriage age for a girl was between 12 and 20. Past 20, the girl was an "old maid". The age of marriage for men was 20-30, but usually close to 30.

8:1 See note at 13:1.

8:2 See Proverbs 9:10

8:13 Compare this whole chapter with 10:23-11:1.

9:1 See note at 4:9.

9:3 There must have been a number of Jews, and possibly other Christian leaders, who questioned the fact that Paul was a genuine apostle of Jesus.

9:14 See Matthew 10:5-10, especially verse 10.

9:15 There is something missing here in all our manuscripts. Either Paul's thought was interrupted as he dictated the letter, or the stenographer omitted a line or so as he copied his notes, or (more likely) some later copyist omitted a line or more in copying the letter. Whatever it was, it must have been something like what we have added here in the parenthesis.

9:21 These people would be all those who aren't Jews, called the "other nations" (gentiles) by the Jews. See Romans 2:14.

- 9:25a The Greeks were the originators of our modern sports contests, with their Olympic Games, held every four years at Olympia, and the Isthmian Games, held in Corinth every two years, and many others. These contests were very popular, and drew large crowds of people to watch, and the finest athletes in the world to take part.
- b The prize awarded to the winner in any event in the games was simply a little crown, or wreath, woven of laurel leaves. It had no material value at all, and in a few days the leaves were all withered and dead. The value of such a crown was that it marked the man who wore it as the winner of a race or contest in which the world's athletes had competed.
- c See 2 Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10 and 3:11.
- 10:1a See Exodus 13:21-22.
- b See Exodus 14:22-29.
- 10:3 See Exodus 16:4 and 35.
- 10:4a See Exodus 17:6.
- b See Matthew 16:18-19 and Ephesians 2:20.
- 10:8 See Numbers 25:1-9.
- 10:9 See Numbers 21:5-6.
- 10:10 See Numbers 14:2, 36 and 16:41-49.
- 10:11 See note at Acts 2:17a
- 10:16 See note at Luke 22:20.
- 10:23 See 6:12-20.
- 11:1 Compare this last sentence with 4:16.
- 11:4 See note at Acts 11:27.
- 11:5 Having her head shaved was the ultimate mark of disgrace for a woman. This was the punishment given to a married woman who had been caught in the act of adultery.
- 11:6 Among the Greeks and Jews in those days

only the prostitutes cut their hair short.

11:10a The Jews and early Christians were always aware of the presence of the angels in our midst at all times. And since they were the highest of God's heavenly creatures, we must not offend them either.

b This refers to the wearing of a veil, which was a universal oriental custom. And the early Christians in that part of the world continued to follow this custom. The veil was the mark of a married woman, and it showed everyone the fact that in marriage she had been brought under her husband's authority and protection. So the veil was the wife's security when she went out in public, and it permitted her to walk the streets unharmed and unmolested.

11:19 Compare this paragraph with 1:10-11.

11:23 See picture and note at Matthew 14:17.

11:25a See note at Matthew 26:28.

b See Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-23, and Luke 22:17-20.

11:30 See note at Matthew 9:24.

12:27 See note at John 15:5.

13:1 There is more than one word for "love" in the Greek language, and Jesus and the apostles used the most common one to describe the love one human being has for another friend, either male or female. Often such love is aroused by sexual desires, and is often a sinful feeling. And usually it is a physical, emotional feeling. But to describe God's pure love for all men and women, as in John 3:16, the Bible used another, less common word, and filled it with new meaning, since God's love is purely unselfish and holy, and is interested always in the other person's true welfare. And the church then

used this word to describe the love a Christian should have for both God and other people - a purely unselfish love, which is not just an emotion, but a true interest in that person's best interests and welfare. We must therefore translate this as "Christian love".

13:12 Mirrors in those days were polished sheets of metal, and gave very blurred and imperfect images, like the funny mirrors they used to have in the circus sideshows.

14:1 See note at Acts 11:27.

14:25 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.

14:29 See note at Acts 11:27.

14:33 See note at Matthew 27:52.

14:34 See Genesis 3:16.

15:2 See James 2:17.

15:3 See Isaiah 53:8-9.

15:4 See Psalm 16:10 and Jonah 1:17-2:10.

15:6 See note at Matthew 9:24.

15:7a See note at Acts 12:17.

b See Matthew 28:16-20.

15:8 The Greek says a child born as the result of a miscarriage.

15:23 See the description of this in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

15:33 A quotation from Menander in his Thais.

15:44a Literally a "psychic" body, having a soul like the animals. Here the "soul" (psyche) means the animal-like instincts, desires and appetites. Our bodies remain under the control of these animal desires all our life (see 2:14 and Judas 14).

b That is, a body which is controlled by God's Holy Spirit. We shall have to wait until the resurrection to receive such a body.

15:45 See John 5:21, 26-29 and 6:63

15:50a See note at Romans 7:18.

b See John 3:5-6 and Revelation 21:27.

15:51 See note at Matthew 9:24.

15:52 See Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

16:1 See Acts 24:17 and 3 Corinthians 8.

16:11 Timothy was a young man, Paul's assistant. Compare 1 Timothy 4:12, which was written 8-10 years later.

16:12 See Acts 18:24-19:1 for background information.

16:14 See note at 13:1.

16:15 See note at Matthew 27:52.

16:19 See Acts 18:2-3, 18-19 and 26 for background information.

16:22 This short little sentence was not written in Greek, as was the rest of the letter, but in Aramaic, the language spoken by the Jews in Israel at the time. In English letters it reads "maranatha!" It was probably a popular little secret password, or slogan used by Christians all over the world as a greeting or "good-bye", reminding one another of their Christian hope.

16:24 See note at John 15:5. Regarding verses 21-24, see 2 Thessalonians 3:17 (page 582).

2 Corinthians

Title This is really the third letter to Corinth. See note at 10:1.

1:1 See note at Matthew 27:52.

1:9 See Acts 19:23-41.

1:14 See note at Acts 2:17a.

1:20 The Greek says "when we say 'Amen'". Amen is a Hebrew word meaning "this is the truth". Here Paul is talking about God's promises to us. And our response, when we hear them, is

to say "Amen", that is "He (God) speaks the truth," since Jesus has fulfilled all these promises.

- 1:21 See picture and note at Acts 4:27.
- 2:3 This would be his second letter to Corinth (page 500), which is usually printed as chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians.
- 2:5 This was the man who was guilty of incest (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-5). Now, however, he had changed his mind and his way of living.
- 2:9 See 2 Corinthians 10:6.
- 2:14 It was a common practice in the ancient world for the king to bring his captives home in chains after a victorious military campaign, and parade them through the streets of his cities as a way of celebrating his victory.
- 3:1 This refers to 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10.
- 3:6 The new agreement is God's promise that all our sins are forgiven by Jesus' death. See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 3:9 See note at Romans 1:17. That is, it takes away all our sins.
- 3:16 See Exodus 34:34.
- 4:6 See Genesis 1:3.
- 5:1a The word "tent" in this paragraph refers to our human body, which is our temporary home.
- b And the "house in heaven" refers to our new resurrection body, which is our permanent home. See also Ephesians 4:22-24.
- 5:12 See 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10.
- 5:17 See note at John 15:5.
- 5:19 See 1 John 2:2.
- 5:21a See Isaiah 53:4-6, especially verse 6b, and compare Leviticus 16:21-22.
- b See note at Romans 1:17.

- 6:2 See Hebrews 3:7-15.
- 6:4-5 See 2 Corinthians 11:23-24 and 27.
- 6:6 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 6:17 See Isaiah 52:11, Ezekiel 20:34 and compare Revelation 21:27 and Matthew 5:48.
- 6:18 See 2 Samuel 7:8-14 and Isaiah 43:6.
- 7:3 See 6:11-12.
- 7:5 See 2:12-13.
- 7:8 See 2:1-4 and note at verse 3.
- 7:11 Here Paul is again talking about the case of incest. See 2:5-8 and 1 Corinthians 5:1.
- 8:1 Title For 8:1-15, see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, and Acts 24:17.
- 8:4 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 8:12 See Luke 21:1-4.
- 8:18 See 2 Corinthians 12:18.
- 8:22 According to Acts 20:4 this would be Trophimus.
- 9:1 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 9:2 This tells us that this letter was written in Macedonia, no doubt Philippi.
- 9:10 See Isaiah 55:10.
- 9:11 It is clear that some part of the letter is missing here, because the rest of this chapter has no subject or main verb. A part of a page may have been destroyed before any copies were made. All we can do is make an educated guess as to what Paul may have said here. Looking at what goes before and what follows, it would seem that what was omitted may have been something like what we have put in parentheses in vss 12-13.
- 9:15 Here the letter ends in the midst of a sentence. See note at 10:1.

10:1 The letter we call "2 Corinthians" is really parts of Paul's second and third letters to Corinth. These last four chapters (10-13) are the last part of the "angry" letter that Paul talks about in chapter 2:3-9. As you read these last 4 chapters you will feel his anger. But the first 9 chapters are really the first part of the 3rd letter, which is a warm and friendly letter. See note at Acts 20:2. And since we know that there were two letters chapters 10-13 should really be printed first.

In Paul's day all letters were written on papyrus, the first "paper", and when the writer finished the first sheet another was pasted on until a long letter looked just like a roll of paper towels. And when the letter was done, it was rolled up, just like a roll of towels. But both ends of a roll were likely to break off because of the constant rolling and unrolling when the letter was read.

Both letters were surely kept together in Corinth. But after hundreds of rollings and unrollings the first part of the third letter got broken off and the last part of the second letter got broken off.

Then three or four hundred years later some monk in Italy, who couldn't read the Greek, thought these were just one letter, so he put them together, but in the wrong order. That's why chapters 10-13 should come first.

10:3 See note at Romans 7:18.

10:6 Here Paul was talking about the fact that the people in Corinth hadn't settled the case of incest yet (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

11:6 Paul had been educated as a rabbi under Gamaliel, the most famous rabbi of that age (see note at Matthew 8:19b).

- 11:22 In Paul's day there were two groups of Jews. The "Hebrews", who lived in Jerusalem and Judea and spoke Aramaic, considered themselves the "real" Jews. But the "Greeks", who lived all over the world and spoke Greek were frowned upon (see Acts 6:1 and the note there). Those who spoke Aramaic kept all the festivals because they lived right there in Jerusalem. But those who lived far away and could only come to Jerusalem once or twice in a lifetime, were looked upon as second class Jews.
- 11:26 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 11:33 See Acts 9:24-25.
- 12:2a See note at John 15:5.
- b The ancient Jews used the word "heaven" in many ways. There was 1) what we would call the atmosphere, or the air surrounding our world; 2) the "outer" heavens, which we call outer space, containing all the stars, suns and planets; and 3) the highest or uppermost heaven, where God dwells. They spoke of this as the "highest" or "third" heaven.
- 12:7 There have been many guesses made by many people as to what this "thorn in the flesh" was, but it could have been anything - kidney stones, gall stones, stomach ulcers, rheumatic pains, slipped disc, migraine headaches, angina pains, etc. etc.
- 12:12 See note at 1 Corinthians 4:9.
- 12:18 This was probably Tychicus. See Acts 20:4.
- 13:4 See note at John 15:5.
- 13:5 See note at John 15:5.
- 13:12 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 13:13 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

- Title** This was Paul's first letter, written very soon after he had returned home to Antioch after his first missionary trip, and after he and Barnabas had been to Jerusalem to settle the question of whether all the new non-Jewish believers had to be circumcised (see Acts 15:1-35). At that same time Paul received news from his new churches in Galatia that the pharisaic Jewish Christians had been at work there also, telling all the new believers they had to be circumcised. So Paul sat down and wrote a hot letter to them, since he was very upset about this.
- 1:2** The churches Paul had started in Galatia were in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. see map on page 368, and Acts 13:13-14:23.
- 1:3** See note at John 14:27.
- 1:12a** See note at Matthew 8:19b. Paul himself was a rabbi, having studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). What he is saying here therefore, is that he hadn't heard this "news" about Jesus from any man, and that what he had learned and was now teaching was something entirely different from the old Jewish teachings he had learned from Gamaliel.
- b** See verses 1:16-18.
- 1:13** See Acts 9:1-2.
- 1:14** See note at Matthew 15:2, and read 15:2-6 completely.
- 1:16** See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 1:17** To understand verses 16-18, read Acts 9:1-25.
- 1:19** See Mark 6:3. This man also wrote the Letter of James (see later).
- 1:21** Read Acts 9:26-30 and 11:19-26. Antioch was in the province of Syria, and Tarsus, Paul's home town, was in Cilicia. You will find Syria on the map on page 332, and Antioch and Tarsus on the map on page 368.

- 2:1 See Acts 15:1-2.
- 2:2 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 2:3 See note at Luke 1:59.
- 2:6 Paul was referring to the fact that all of the twelve apostles were originally men of very low station in life - fishermen, tax collectors, etc. None of them had ever been regarded by the Jews as "leaders" in the community. Paul, however, had held a very high position among the Jews, because he was a rabbi, and the rabbis were the most highly respected men in the Jewish nation. At that time he had been a real leader and a Pharisee, whom everybody respected. But he didn't feel bad that now those men who hadn't been "in his class" at all, were now the leaders whom everybody recognized. And he accepted them as leaders who were his equals, because God had made them leaders.
- 2:10 See 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15, and Acts 24:17.
- 2:12a See Acts 11:2-3, and the note at verse 3.
- b God had never given the Jews any law that said all unbelievers of other nations had to be circumcised if they accepted the God of the Jews as their God and came to believe in Him. It was the rabbis who made this law much later, and it was a part of the laws in their big body of rules called the Tradition of the Elders (see Matthew 15:2, and the note there). And it was the Pharisees who insisted on this in Jesus' day. And since some Pharisees had become Christians they insisted that all non-Jews had to be circumcised and become "Jews" in order to become Christians. And since the Pharisees were very religious people, everybody respected them and did what they said.
- 2:14 See the note at Matthew 6:32. Paul was no

doubt talking about the fact that Peter had long ago stopped following all the rabbis' rules (their 'tradition'). The reason why is made clear in Acts 10:1-11:18.

2:15 This is the way the typical Jew in those days looked upon all non-Jews - as sinners, dogs, people to be ignored and avoided.

2:16 See note at Romans 1:17.

2:20a See note at John 15:5.

b See note at Romans 7:18.

3:6 See note at Romans 1:17.

3:8 See note at Matthew 6:32.

3:13 See 1 Peter 1:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23.

3:17 See note at Matthew 26:28.

3:24 The word used here means a special slave who was appointed by a father to take care of his young children. This slave had charge of and authority over the children, and never left them during the day. Thus they were completely under his power. But the point here is that this guardian was to serve only until the child reached the age of 21, when he or she became an adult.

3:26 In the ancient world the father chose only certain ones of his children to be his heirs, who would inherit his property. These were called his "sons", and not merely his children. We would have to call them his "children in the full sense".

3:28a See note at John 15:5.

b Here our union with Christ is pictured as being the same as the union existing between a man and his wife - "the two will become one." (Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:22-33).

4:3 Paul might have been talking about the sun, moon and stars here, which most of the an-

cient people believed controlled everything in their lives.

4:4 This refers to the first promise in Genesis 3:15. And God chose Mary to be the mother.

4:5 See 3:26 and the note there.

4:9 See verse 3.

4:10 See 2 Chronicles 8:13. The danger was that by keeping the Saturday law as the Jews had always done, they were putting themselves under the Law again.

4:23a Read Genesis 16.

b First read Genesis 18 and then Genesis 21:2.

4:25 At this time Israel was a slave nation ruled by the Roman emperors.

5:2 Read Acts 15:1-20, which describes a similar situation in Antioch. This letter was written just before Paul left Antioch to go to Jerusalem to settle that matter. Read also the note at Luke 1:59.

5:6 See note at John 15:5.

5:13 See note at Romans 7:18.

5:17 See Romans 7:15-19.

5:22 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

6:12 See note at 2:12b.

6:15 See 5:6 and 1 Corinthians 7:19.

6:16 See note at John 14:27.

6:18 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Ephesians

Title The letter to the Ephesians was written at the same time as the letters to Philemon and Colossians, and the subject matter is the same as that in Colossians, except that it is covered more thoroughly here. (see note at Colossians, Title). All three letters

were carried by Tychicus.

1:1a See note at Matthew 27:52.

- b The name "Ephesus" is not found in verse 1 in any of our oldest manuscripts. There was, however, a blank space after "in", where the name of a city could be put in by the reader. This was to be a "circular" letter, which was to start in Ephesus, and then be taken to Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea and Colossae. See map on page 368. See also Revelation 1:11.

1:4a God chooses us, we don't choose Him.

- b This is what the word "righteous" means, which we have translated as "perfectly holy". See note at Romans 1:17.

1:9 Paul wrote Ephesians and Colossians and sent them both by the same carrier at the same time. They were written to warn the Christians in the province of Asia against a popular kind of pagan religion called "Gnosticism". The word comes from the Greek word for knowledge (gnosis). It was a religion which taught that we are saved by what we know and are able to discover about the divine "secrets" and powers which lie hidden in the universe and control it.

These Gnostics were teaching the Christians that both the Jewish and Christian faiths were incomplete forms of Gnosticism. Paul wrote to remind the believers that in the Bible and the Good News about Christ they had the full knowledge (gnosis) of the one true God, and what He has done for fallen mankind to save them from eternal death, and that any other kind of knowledge (gnosis) which differed from God's knowledge was both false and worthless. See also Paul's view of Gnosticism in 1 Timothy 6:20-21.

Here Paul points out that this whole sec-

ret plan was made known through the Old Testament prophets.

1:10 Compare verses 10-11a with Colossians 1:15-17 and the notes there.

1:11 This is a reference to Exodus 19:1-6, where God called the nation of Israel to be His own special people through the work of Jesus, the promised Messiah, in what was later called the Old Agreement. In the New Agreement it is Jesus Himself who calls us to be God's own special people.

1:12a Often in this letter the reader must pay close attention to the pronouns "we" and "you", since when Paul speaks about "we" and "us", as he does here, he means "we Jewish believers. And when he talks about "you" he means "you non-Jewish believers".

b See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:13a See note at 1:12a.

b See Matthew 3:11, Luke 24:49, and Acts 1:8.

1:15a See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

b See note at Matthew 27:52.

1:17 "The whole fullness of the true God" was another Gnostic phrase which apparently referred to their pantheistic idea that God is in everything and everybody, and that the whole universe, therefore, makes up "the fullness of the divine being." But Paul uses the words in such a way as to give it a Christian meaning, again applying it to Christ, in Colossians 1:19 and 2:9. And in this verse Paul reminds his readers that "full knowledge" can come only from the Holy Spirit.

1:21 In verses 19-23 Paul reminds his readers that God the Father and Jesus, His Son, and the Holy Spirit are the only divine rulers in the universe, controlling all powers

- 2:1 See note at 1:12a.
- 2:2 This reference to the devil uses typical Gnostic language and identifies all rulers powers and forces outside the Triune God as Satanic. See 6:12 and John 12:31.
- 2:3a See note at 1:12a.
- b See note at Romans 7:18.
- 2:11a See note at Matthew 6:32.
- b The only people who were circumcised in Paul's time were the Jews. For more information, see the note at Luke 1:59.
- 2:12 This refers to God's original promise of the Savior in Genesis 3:15, and the restatement to Abraham, when God made His agreement with him (Genesis 12:1-3).
- 2:20 See Psalm 118:22-23, Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:6 and Matthew 16:18.
- 3:1a Some part of this letter was lost at this place. And since it was at the beginning of a new sentence, it is impossible to say what or how much was lost. But if it was only a few words, it may have been something like what we have printed in the parenthesis.
- b See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 3:3 See 1:9-10, 13-14, and 2:11-22.
- 3:5 See note at Acts 11:27.
- 3:6 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 3:8 See 1 Corinthians 15:9.
- 3:10 Note that here Paul makes it clear that all true knowledge must come from the Church, even to the angels in heaven!
- 3:18 Read 1 Corinthians 13.
- 3:19 Here also Paul uses Gnostic language and words. The higher the god was in the Gnostic system, the greater was his "fullness" of all good things, with which he could fill his followers. See note at 1:17.

- 4:6 Here too Paul uses typically Gnostic language. See note at John 15:5.
- 4:10a See note at 2 Corinthians 12:2b.
- b See note at 1:17 and read Colossians 1:19.
- 4:11 See 1 Corinthians 12:28.
- 4:12 See 1:23.
- 4:13 See Colossians 1:9 and notice that Paul is saying here that the knowledge of God's Son is the knowledge (gnosis) that is most needed and worthwhile. See also note at 1:9.
- 4:14 Here Paul is clearly talking about the Gnostics.
- 4:16 See Colossians 2:19, and note that the Church grows by Christian love. See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 4:17 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 4:18 See note at John 1:5.
- 4:19 Compare Romans 1:24-32.
- 4:22 This is another name for our old sinful nature (flesh). See note at Romans 7:18.
- 5:2 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 5:5 See Galatians 5:19-21.
- 5:8 See 4:18.
- 5:14 This appears to be another of Paul's quotations from one of the early hymns. And the last line reminds us that Christ is the Light of this world (John 8:12).
- 5:32 See note at Colossians 1:26a.
- 6:4 See Colossians 3:20-21.
- 6:9 See Colossians 4:1.
- 6:12 All the heavenly powers and forces of the Gnostics were created by their imagination, but the devil and all his wicked angels and followers are real. Here Paul uses gnostic words to define such satanic forces. See 1:21 and Colossians 1:16.

- 6:14 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 6:18 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 6:19 Here Paul uses the Gnostic term "mystery", or secret very effectively. There is one all-important secret that no man or woman knows by nature, but it's a secret God wants everyone to know. This secret, of course, is that God loves all men and women, and that He has worked out a plan of salvation for every human being. But this secret must be revealed to those who do not know it by those who do. This was Paul's business as an apostle. It is also our business - to tell everyone we know about this secret. See note at Colossians 1:26a.
- 6:23 See note at John 14:27.
- 6:24 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Philippians

- Title In late 61 or early 62 A.D. Paul wrote another letter to his most faithful little congregation in Philippi, telling them that his trial was now scheduled to take place shortly, and that he was confident that he would be found not guilty of any crime, and set free. And as soon as he was released he planned to come and see them.
- 1:1a See note at Matthew 27:52.
- b See note at John 15:5.
- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:6 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 1:9 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 1:24 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 2:8 In the Roman world the only people who were crucified were the worst criminals.
- 2:15 See Matthew 5:14.

- 2:16 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 2:17 When the Greeks brought a sacrifice to one of their gods, the priest poured out a cup of wine over the sacrifice to make it complete and acceptable to that god. Paul here pictures himself as the priest, making their sacrifice complete with His own life-blood as the drink offering.
- 2:25 This paragraph tells us that Epaphroditus carried this letter to Philippi.
- 3:3 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 3:9a See note at John 15:5.
- b See note at Romans 1:17.
- 4:3a After all these years no one has any idea which one of Paul's close friends this was, but the only real choices would be either Silas, Luke, Titus, Lydia or Epaphroditus.
- b See Psalm 69:28, Revelation 3:5, 20:12 and 21:27.
- 4:7 See note at John 14:27
- 4:21 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 4:23 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Colossians

Title Sometime during 60 or 61 A.D. while Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he had a visitor named Epaphras (see 4:12), who was a member of the congregation in Colossae, a city which was about 100 miles east of Ephesus (see map on page 368). He brought bad news, that some people called Gnostics had been busy in Asia spreading their false religion and deceiving some of the Christians there, and leading them away from their faith in Jesus to worship pagan gods. So this was the letter Paul sent back to Colossae. Tychicus, one of Paul's helpers, carried the letter (see 4:7-8).

- 1:2a See note at Matthew 27:52.
b See note at John 15:5.
c See note at John 14:27.
- 1:4a See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
b See Note at Matthew 27:52.
- 1:6 See note at Ephesians 1:9.
- 1:9 Here Paul quotes the old Hebrew thought that the beginning of wisdom or knowledge (gnosis) is the knowledge of the true, Triune God. Therefore any "full knowledge", a pet term of the Gnostics, of any other god is also worthless. See note at Ephesians 1:9.
- 1:13 See note at John 1:5.
- 1:16 See note at Ephesians 1:21.
- 1:17 Here Paul is referring to the Hebrew word "Yahweh", which was God's personal name in the Old Testament. It means "He who is". (See Exodus 3:14). This is the Christian teaching of God's eternal nature. There was no time when God wasn't, or won't be. He always is. See also note at John 8:24.
- 1:19 See note at Ephesians 1:17.
- 1:22 This is really the meaning of the word "righteous", which should be translated as "perfectly holy". See note at Romans 1:17.
- 1:26a This is another reference to Gnosticism, which was a system emphasizing knowledge. It claimed to be able to give people the knowledge of all the divine secrets, and thus bring them salvation. The Gnostics, however, were like our modern secret societies or lodges. They revealed these secrets only to the chosen few who joined their society, but they carefully kept all these things secret from everyone else. God's wisdom, of course, is also a secret, or unknown thing, to the world of fallen men and women.
But God's plan is just the opposite of

the Gnostics' plan. He wants everyone to know about His secrets, and He never intends that they should be kept from anyone.

1:26b See note at Matthew 27:52.

1:27 See note at Matthew 6:32.

1:28 See note at John 15:5.

2:2 See note at 1:9.

2:3 See note at 1:26. This is a beautiful and effective way of summing up God's whole message to mankind. The secret we want to tell everybody about is Christ, who brings us God's wisdom and knowledge (gnosis), and salvation (see 1 Corinthians 1:22-25).

2:8 Here Paul is talking about such things as the natural laws governing the heavenly bodies, and other natural laws and principles, which also formed an important part of gnostic religion.

2:9 Here, as always, Paul takes the gnostic word "fullness" and applies it to Christ. See also note at Ephesians 1:17.

2:10 See note at Ephesians 1:21, and see how Paul again applies all this to Christ.

2:11a This tells us that these Gnostics were Jews who were trying to fill the Old Testament religion with gnostic ideas. On Christian (Christ's) circumcision, see Deuteronomy 30:6 and Romans 2:29.

b See 3:9-10 and note at Romans 7:18.

2:12 See Romans 6:3-4.

2:13a See Ephesians 2:1.

b That is, they weren't members of the nation of Israel, God's chosen Old Testament people.

2:15 See 3 Corinthians 2:14 and the note there.

2:16 This also shows that these gnostic teachers were Jews.

2:17 See Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1.

- 2:18 See note at Ephesians 1:21.
- 2:19 See Ephesians 4:15-16.
- 2:20 See 2:8.
- 2:21 The Gnostics also had a lot of dietary and other health rules, like many other religions, both Christian and pagan.
- 2:23 See note at Romans 7:18.
- 3:3 See John 10:30 and 38.
- 3:4 See Galatians 2:20, John 11:25 and 14:6.
- 3:9 See 2:11.
- 3:10 See note at 1:9.
- 3:11a See Galatians 3:28.
- b See note at John 15:5. Gnosticism was a form of pantheism, the religion which teaches that God is everywhere and fills everything, every human being and creature, and the whole universe. Here Paul again uses their vocabulary and applies it to Christ and the Church. See also note at Ephesians 1:17.
- 3:15 See note at John 14:27.
- 3:16 See Ephesians 5:19.
- 3:17 See 1 Corinthians 10:31.
- 3:18 See Ephesians 5:22-24 and Genesis 3:16.
- 3:19 See Ephesians 5:25-33.
- 3:20 See Ephesians 6:1-3.
- 3:21 See Ephesians 6:4.
- 3:25 This section was no doubt included in this letter because at this time Paul was thinking of the relations between Christian slaves and their Christian masters. For we know that Paul was planning to send a runaway slave, Onesimus, back to his master, Philemon, one of Paul's friends in Colossae. Tychicus would go with Onesimus and carry this letter, and one to Philemon, and one

to all the churches in the area (Ephesians). See 4:9. Both slaves and masters had their duties. See Ephesians 6:5-8.

4:1 See Ephesians 6:9

4:3 See note at 1:26a.

4:9 See the letter to Philemon.

4:10 See Acts 19:29, 20:4, and 27:2.

4:16 This is the letter we know as "Ephesians", which was written at the same time as this letter to Colossae and the personal letter to Philemon (see note at Philemon 1). All three letters were carried at the same time by Paul's assistant, Tychicus. He was to drop off the circular letter in Ephesus, and start it going on its rounds there, and that circular letter would end up in Colossae (see note at Ephesians 1:1).

4:17 See Philemon, verse 2.

4:18 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

1 Thessalonians

Title See note at Acts 18:4c.

1:1a Silas was Paul's co-worker on his second missionary trip (Acts 15:40), and was with Paul on his visit to Thessalonica (Acts 17:4). The Greeks pronounced his Aramaic name She-ila as Silas. The Romans had a name Silvanus, which they used as the closest equivalent to Silas. When Paul wrote this letter he used the Roman name, and older translations continue to use this name.

b Timothy joined Paul and Silas at Lystra and went along as their helper (Acts 16:1-3).

c See note at John 15:5.

d See note at John 14:27.

- 1:6 See Acts 17:5-9.
- 2:1 See Acts 17:4.
- 2:2a See Acts 16:16-40.
- b See Acts 17:5-9.
- 2:4 See Galatians 1:10.
- 2:9 See note at Acts 18:3.
- 2:14 See note at John 15:5.
- 2:16 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 2:17 See Acts 17:5-10a.
- 3:12 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 3:13 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 4:5 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 4:17 See Matthew 24:31, Luke 24:51, Acts 1:9-11 and Revelation 1:7.
- 5:2a See note at Acts 2:17a.
- b See Matthew 24:42-43.
- 5:12 See note at Matthew 4:23.
- 5:23 See note at John 14:27.
- 5:28 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

2 Thessalonians

- Title See note at Acts 18:4c.
- 1:1a See note at 1 Thessalonians 1:1a.
- b See note at 1 Thessalonians 1:1b.
- c See note at John 15:5.
- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:9 See Isaiah 2:10 and Matthew 25:41 and 46.
- 1:10 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 2:2 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 2:3a See Matthew 24:9-21.
- b See Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15. These both give us pictures of an Antichrist, some

human being or power who is one of the devil's tools. In Daniel 9:27 he is called that terrible thing who destroys everything. Here Paul calls him "the great Destroyer".

- 2:7 It's a strange thing that there is not one word anywhere in the Bible which explains who this "someone" is who is keeping the lawlessness of the devil under control in our world. And the few guesses that have been given are not satisfactory. But it would seem that the only person who could possibly do this would be the Holy Spirit. And it might be possible that the Father and Son might do this to bring the sinfulness of the world to its awful climax just before Jesus' return for the Judgment.

- 3:8 See note at Acts 18:3.
Compare with 1 Corinthians 4:12.

- 3:16 See note at John 14:27.

1 Timothy

Title After visiting Crete, following his release from prison (see note at Titus, Title), Paul stopped at Ephesus for a brief visit. And when he left town, he left Timothy there in Ephesus to supervise the work there. And some few months later he wrote this letter, before sailing off for Spain, probably from Corinth or Nicopolis.

- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.

- 1:4a The false teachers mentioned in verse 3 were no doubt the same Jewish Gnostics that were active all over Asia and Crete (see notes at Ephesians 1:9a, 1:17, 1:21, 2:2, 3:19, 4:13, 6:12, and 6:19, and Colossians 1:9, 1:26a, 2:3, 8, 9, 11a, 21, and 3:11.

The fairy tales mentioned here might have

been the many stories in Greek mythology and other eastern mythologies about the stars and planets, which were regarded as gods, or the stories about the people in Genesis 5:3-32 and 11:10-25. See note at Titus 1:14.

- 1:4b The lists of fathers and children could be the lists in Genesis 5 and 11, or they could be the long lists of fathers and children in Greek mythology or other eastern religions. Their gods had many children, who became less divine and more human as time went on. And to know the "true" gods and the most powerful ones, one had to trace them back through all these lists. This was gnosis.
- 1:5 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 2:4 See note at Ephesians 1:17.
- 2:7 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 2:15a This must be a reference to the first promise of a Savior, given to Adam and Eve right after the Fall into sin in Genesis 3:15.
- b See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 3:2 See note at Titus 1:6.
- 3:8 See note at Romans 16:1.
- 3:9 See note at Colossians 1:26a.
- 3:16 This is probably a quotation from one of the early Christian hymns.
- 4:3 Most of the gnostic groups also taught things like this. They thought all "matter" was sinful, and therefore they said marriage was evil because it resulted in the creation of new bodies. For the same reason they regarded food as really evil. Notice that Paul says here that Christians have a "full" knowledge" of God's truth, as opposed to this false "knowledge" (gnosis). See note at Ephesians 1:17.
- 4:7 See 1:4 and the notes there.

5:9a Here we see that the early congregations all had a group of widows who were supported by the congregation, since they had no one else to take care of them, and also that eligible widows were put on some kind of a list. And the qualifications are given in the following verses. They probably had many little jobs to do in the congregation in return for this support. 5:12 also tells us that they had to promise to stay single.

b See note at Titus 1:6. A wife could also have more than one husband.

6:11 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

6:12 This is speaking of the Olympic games. See note at 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.

6:19 See Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 12:33-34 & 18:22.

6:20 See notes at 1:4.

6:21 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

2 Timothy

Title The last definite information we have about Paul was that he was planning to sail from Nicopolis for Spain in the spring of 63 A.D. (See Titus 3:12). Paul had planned this trip for a long time (see Romans 15:24 and 28). And this last letter suggests that he was arrested again in 65 or 66 in Troas, after his return (4:13). This was during Nero's persecution, and during this last imprisonment in Rome he wrote this letter to Timothy, asking him to hurry to Rome to be with Paul during his last days. Tradition says Paul was beheaded by Nero in 66 or 67 A.D.

1:2 See note at John 14:27.

1:6 This probably took place at a special service in Lystra when Paul chose Timothy to go with him on his second missionary trip

in 50. See Acts 16:1-3 and 1 Timothy 4:14.

1:12a Paul has now been arrested and put in prison again, this time in a real prison. See 4:6.

b See note at Acts 2:17a.

1:15 This would be the time when Nero was attacking the Christians, which began in 64 and soon reached its height. But now the attacks had spread to the provinces. Ephesus, where Paul had left Timothy (see 1 Timothy 1:3), was the capital of the Asia province.

1:18 See note at Acts 2:17a.

2:8 This sounds like a quotation from an early Christian creed, a statement of what one believes.

2:11 See Romans 6:8 and 6:4.

2:12 See Matthew 10:33.

2:13a See Romans 3:3-4.

b See Numbers 23:19. These lines sound like lines from another early hymn.

2:14 Here Paul may be talking about the way the rabbis would argue about all the different meanings a word might have.

2:19a See Numbers 16:5b and John 10:14.

b See Numbers 16:26.

2:22a See note at Romans 1:17.

b See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

c See note at John 14:27.

2:25 See note at Ephesians 1:17.

3:1 See note at Acts 2:17a.

3:7 See note at Ephesians 1:17.

3:8 Old Jewish books give these two names to the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses at the time of the exodus. See Exodus 7:11-22.

3:11 See Acts 13:14-14:19.

- 4:4 See 1 Timothy 1:4 and the note there, and Titus 1:14 and 3:9, and the notes there.
- 4:6 See note at Philippians 2:17.
- 4:8 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 4:13 See the picture and note at Luke 4:17.
- 4:14 See 1 Timothy 1:20.
- 4:17 See note at Matthew 6:32.
- 4:22 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Titus

- Title** After Paul's release from prison in 62 A.D. he continued his travels, visiting Crete for the first time, and then going back to Ephesus and Philippi in that order. Then he must have gone on to Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth, since he wrote to Titus in the fall to join him in Nicopolis by spring. (See map on page 368 for all the places named).
- 1:4 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:6 There was a great deal of bigamy (having more than one wife) and adultery (having sex with some woman other than one's wife) in the ancient world, especially among the wealthy families, where the men usually had several wives and mistresses.
- 1:10 Read Acts 15, including note at 15:1.
- 1:12 This is a quotation from the Cretan poet Epimenides, who lived about 500 B.C., in his De Oraculis.
- 1:14 The false teachers described here may have been Jewish Gnostics, something like those in Colossae and Ephesus, whose secret knowledge (gnosis) was based in part on apocryphal books about the people whose names are listed in Genesis 5:3-12 and 11:10-25. These books contained many real "fairy tales" or

made-up stories about such people as Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, etc. These stories and long lists of ancestors are mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:4, which was written about the same time as this letter, and about similar problems. On the Gnostics in general, see notes in Ephesians 1:9, 17, 3:19, and 6:12.

2:2 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

3:4 On God's accepting us as perfectly holy, see note at Romans 1:17.

3:9 See note at 1:14.

3:13 See note at Matthew 2:4.

3:15 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Philemon

Title While Paul was in prison in Rome, a slave named Onesimus came to him asking for help. He had run away from his master, Philemon, who lived in Colossae. And while he was with Paul, he became a believer in Jesus, and Paul convinced him that he must go back to Philemon and apologize and take his punishment. But Paul also told him that he (Paul) would write Philemon a letter, asking him to forgive Onesimus. This is the letter. And Paul sent Onesimus back with Tychicus, who was carrying letters also to the congregations in the area, including one to Colossae.

1:1 Philemon was a Christian who lived in Colossae. Apphia was no doubt his wife, and Archippus may have been his son. Philemon was fairly rich, since he had a large house which served as the meeting house in Colossae.

1:3 See note at John 14:27.

1:5 See note at Matthew 27:52.

1:9 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

- 1:10 Paul is using the word "father" here in a spiritual sense, telling Philemon that it was through his efforts that Onesimus had been brought to faith and born again.
- 1:11 The name "Onesimus" means "useful".
- 1:19 Since Philemon was obviously a man who had been brought to faith by Paul's preaching or efforts, Paul could truthfully remind him that he (Philemon) owed Paul his life, that is, his eternal Life, which was his most precious possession.
- 1:20 This is the verb from which the name Onesimus (useful) was derived.
- 1:23 Epaphras also lived in Colossae. He was apparently the leader of the congregation there, and had come to Rome to see Paul about some problems that had developed there recently. See Colossians 1:7-8 and 4:12. Calling Epaphras a "fellow prisoner" doesn't mean that Epaphras had been arrested, but that he was living there with Paul in his rented house, sharing Paul's imprisonment.
- 1:25 See 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

Hebrews

- Title Since the writer doesn't tell us who he is anywhere in this fine letter, we really do not know who wrote it. We can see, however that he must have been one of Paul's pupils or friends. And what little evidence we have points to Apollos as the writer (see Acts 18:14-28). Paul was arrested after being nearly killed by the fanatical Pharisees, in 57, when he came back to Jerusalem with the gifts from the churches in Greece. And this brought about a deep disagreement be-

tween the Jewish Christians and those who rejected Jesus as their Messiah. This put the Christian Jews in Jerusalem in a difficult situation, since their families, neighbors and friends were now putting pressure on them to give up their faith in Jesus and return to the old Temple worship. All this would have been a great worry to Paul while he was in prison, first in Caesarea (2 years) and then in Rome (another 2 years). And since Paul was at least partially a cause of this disagreement, he certainly could not have written this letter. But he certainly could have asked Apollos to do so, since he knew that Apollos was fully qualified to write such a letter, which is a true masterpiece.

1:2 See note at Acts 2:17a.

1:4a The word "angel" means a messenger. The ancient kings had many such servants.

b The king, however, had only one son who was named as his heir and who received the kingdom when his father died.

1:8 Every king had a specially decorated staff or rod which was called a "scepter". And this scepter was the mark of the king's royal authority, and identified the man who carried it as the king. But Jesus' "scepter" as the King of kings is His perfect justice. That is, he always does everything right.

1:9 See picture and note at Acts 4:27, and the note at Matthew 1:1.

1:12 See note at John 8:24. His personal name is "I AM", but when we speak of Him, we say, "He is".

2:4 See 1 Corinthians 12.

2:6 This was Jesus' favorite name for himself. See note at Matthew 8:20.

2:10a See Philippians 2:5-11.

- 2:10b See Luke 19:10.
- 2:16 See Isaiah 41:8-9.
- 3:2 See Numbers 12:7. Here God's "family" was the entire nation of Israel, since God had made His covenant with them that they would be His chosen people (family) in Exodus 19:5-6.
- 3:6 Jesus' "family" is the entire Christian Church, of which He is the Head (see Ephesians 5:24), and it is also the family spoken of in vs 1.
- 3:10 See note at Matthew 21:32, and also read Acts 2:28.
- 3:13 This is the same use of the word "today" that we have in our saying, "here today, gone tomorrow", where today means the period of our life here on earth. The same thought is found in 3 Corinthians 6:2, which is a quotation from Isaiah 49:8, saying that "today" is the only time we have to be saved, since we may be gone tomorrow. The same thought is found in Isaiah 65:2, where the word "day" means the time of our life on earth, followed by the night of death. And then comes the next "Day" of the Lord, the Day of Judgment (Jeremiah 12:3).
- 3:17 See Numbers 14:29.
- 3:19 See verse 11, which is quoted from Psalm 95:11. In this verse the word "rest" has a much deeper meaning than our English word "rest". Among the Jews it meant a place of shelter and safety, where one can be safe and secure from all harm and danger. The best picture of this is in the book of Ruth, where this word is really the key word of the book, appearing first in 1:9, where it is said that Ruth would find a place of rest, meaning a Christian home, where she would be protected by her husband from all

enemies, harm and dangers. And so in Ruth, and all throughout the Old Testament, the home, as a place of rest (safety and security) for the wife, is a beautiful picture of heaven, our place of eternal rest, security and joy. In the same way the promised land of Canaan was such a picture of safety and security for the people of Israel, and another picture of heaven.

4:7 See note at 3:13.

5:4 See Exodus 28:1.

5:6 See 7:1-2..

5:7 See Luke 22:41-44.

5:13 See note at Romans 1:17.

6:8 See Genesis 3:17-18.

6:10 See note at Matthew 27:52.

6:13 See Genesis 22:16.

6:16 See note at Matthew 5:33.

6:17 To find out what an "heir" is, read Galatians 4:1-7, especially vss 1 & 7, & Matt. 21:38.

6:19 The inner room behind the curtain in the Temple was the Holiest Place, where the Head Priest went every year on the Day of Atonement to pour the blood of the sacrifice over the top cover of the Agreement Box to obtain God's forgiveness for all the sins of all the people of Israel for that year (Leviticus 16:15-16). But here the writer is talking about the Inner Room in the heavenly "Temple" where Jesus, the great Head Priest for all people has already poured out His own blood to obtain God's forgiveness for all the sins of all men and women for all time. It is this fact which is the foundation for our faith and the anchor for our hope. See also 10:19-25.

7:2a See Genesis 14:17-20.

- 7:2b Melchizedek was a king who did what was right. But Jesus is the only person who is perfectly holy, because He never did anything wrong or sinful. See note at Rom. 1:17.
- c Peace is another characteristic of Jesus and His Kingdom. There is no war or hatred in that Kingdom, and every member of His Kingdom is at perfect peace with God and men. (See John 14:27, and the note there). Jesus has won peace with God for us by removing all our sins (Ephesians 2:14).
- 7:22 See note at Matthew 26:28.
- 8:5 See Colossians 2:17.
- 8:7 This was the agreement God made with the nation of Israel in the Sinai desert. It is written out from Exodus 19:1 to Leviticus 27:34, beginning with the 10 commandments. The agreement was that they would be God's people and He would be their God, and it was made only between God and the nation of Israel. This old agreement was replaced by the new agreement (verse 8) which Jesus gave to His apostles and followers, beginning with the sermon on the mount.
- 8:10 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 9:2a See Exodus 26:1-30.
- b See Exodus 25:31-40.
- c See Exodus 25:23-30.
- 9:3 See Exodus 26:31-33.
- 9:4a See Exodus 30:1-6.
- b See Exodus 25:10-16.
- c See Exodus 16:33.
- d See Numbers 17:8-10
- e See Exodus 25:16.
- 9:5 See Exodus 25:17-22.
- 9:7 See Leviticus 16:2 and 14-15.

- 9:12 See 1 John 1:7.
- 9:14 See Leviticus 9:2-3 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- 9:22 See Leviticus 17:11.
- 10:1 See 8:5 and Colossians 2:17.
- 10:14 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 10:16 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 10:20a Here the word "way" means an entrance to get in. See John 14:6 and note at Matthew 21:32.
- b See John 14:6.
- 10:22 This is the water of baptism. See Ephesians 5:26, John 3:5 and 1 Peter 3:20-21.
- 10:23 Jesus has promised to keep us safe from all harm and danger (Psalm 121:8), and to bring us into our eternal home to be with Him forever (John 14:3).
- 10:25 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 11:3 See Genesis 1:1.
- 11:4a See Genesis 4:3-10.
- b See note at Romans 1:17.
- 11:7a See Genesis 6:13-22.
- b To find out what an "heir" is, read Galatians 4:1-7, especially vss 1 & 7, & Matt. 21:38.
- 11:8 See Genesis 12:1-5.
- 11:9 See Genesis 23:4, 26:3, 35:12 and 27.
- 11:10 See Revelation 21.
- 11:11a See Genesis 17:19, 18:11-14, 21:2.
- b See Genesis 15:6
- 11:13 See Genesis 23:4 and 1 Chronicles 29:15.
- 11:16 See Revelation 21:9-22:5.
- 11:17 See Genesis 22:1-10.
- 11:20 See Genesis 27:27-40.
- 11:21 See Genesis 48:15-16.
- 11:22 See Genesis 50:24-25.
- 11:26 See note at Matthew 1:1.

- 11:28 See Exodus 12:21-30.
11:29 See Exodus 14:21-31.
11:30 See Joshua 6:12-21.
11:31 See Joshua 2:11-12 and 6:21-25.
11:33 See Daniel 6:1-27.
11:34 See Daniel 3:23-25.
11:35 See 1 Kings 17:17-24.
11:36 See 1 Kings 22:26-27 and Jeremiah 20:2.
11:37 See 2 Chronicles 24:21.
12:2a See 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.
 b Only the worst criminals were crucified.
12:6 To find out what an "heir" is, read Galatians 4:1-7, especially vss 1 & 7, & Matt. 21:38.
12:11 See note at John 14:27.
12:14 See Matthew 5:8 and Revelation 21:27a.
12:16 See Genesis 25:33-34.
12:17 See Genesis 27:30-40.
12:19a See Exodus 19:16-22.
 b See Exodus 20:18-21.
12:20 See Exodus 19:12-13.
12:21 See Deuteronomy 9:19
12:22 See Revelation 21:1-22:5.
12:24a See note at Matthew 26:28.
 b See Genesis 4:10.
13:2 See Genesis 18:1-8 and 19:1-3.
13:4 See Matthew 5:27.
13:9 See note at Matthew 21:32.
13:20a See note at John 14:27.
 b See John 10-11.
13:23 We know that Timothy started out with Paul and several others to bring the collection gathered in Greece to Jerusalem in 57 (Acts 20:4). But after this Timothy disappears. But Apollos' reference to Timothy's impri-

sonment fits in with the fact of Paul's imprisonment in 57 while in Jerusalem. There was really no reason for Luke to mention Timothy's imprisonment, but he might well have chosen to stay in prison with Paul to take care of him. It is also possible that Timothy returned to Rome with Paul, even though Luke never mentions Timothy on this voyage. We do know that Timothy was in Rome with Paul in 61 (see Colossians 1:1).

On the other hand it is more probable that Paul sent Timothy to Jerusalem with Apollos in 61 or 62 to assist him there. And we note that Apollos seemed very sure of the fact that Timothy would be with him when he went to Jerusalem (verse 23). And Timothy would have had plenty of time to get to Rome by 61.

13:24 See note at Matthew 27:52.

James

1:1a This James was Jesus' brother. See Mark 6:3. Shortly after Jesus' ascension James became the head of the Christian church in Jerusalem, and he held this office for many years. He is mentioned in Acts 15:13, Galatians 1:19 and 2:9 as the much respected leader of the early church. This letter was written to Jewish Christians. And this and Matthew's gospel were certainly the earliest of all our New Testament writings, dated between 45 and 50 A.D.

b See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:4 See Romans 5:3-5.

1:9 See Luke 6:20.

1:12 See 1 Corinthians 9:25, 2 Timothy 4:8, 1 Peter 5:4 and Revelation 2:10.

1:18 See Genesis 1:28-30.

- 1:25a The word James uses here is the Hebrew word "Torah", which meant God's "teaching". In the widest sense this would be God's Word (Psalm 19:7-10, 119:105); but in the narrow sense it was used often to refer to God's Law. Here it must be taken in the wide sense. For more information see note at Romans 3:19.
- b See John 8:31-32.
- 2:1 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 2:2 See picture and note at Mark 3:1.
- 2:12 See 1:25b and the note there, and also Romans 8:2.
- 2:16 See note at John 14:27.
- 2:21a See note at Romans 1:17.
- b See Genesis 22:1-9.
- 2:23 See 2 Chronicles 20:7.
- 2:26 Compare this whole section, 2:14-26, with Matthew 25:31-46.
- 4:4 Here James speaks about the "world" in the same way John often does. See note at John 7:7.
- 5:3a See note at Romans 7:18.
- b See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 5:12 See Matthew 5:34-37.
- 5:16 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 5:20 See Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8.

1 Peter

- Title This letter was written by Peter, who arrived in Rome after Paul left the city in 62, following his release from prison. Peter calls Rome "Babylon", because Rome had conquered all the nations of the Mediterranean world, so that all people were living like slaves, just as ancient Babylon had con-

quered the Jewish nation in 606 B.C. Nero was the Emperor, and he hated the Christians because they refused to acknowledge him as their Lord, the Son of God, as all the other people in the empire did. This letter was written to comfort the Christians in the northern part of Asia Minor, who were now suffering for their faith.

- 1:1a See note on Christ at Matthew 1:1.
b See map on page 332 for all these provinces.
- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:4 For the meaning of "inherit", which describes what an "heir" does, read Matthew 21:38 and Romans 8:17.
- 1:5 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 1:11 See note at Matthew 1:1.
- 1:19 See Leviticus 9:2-3 and Hebrew 9:14.
- 1:23 See John 3:3-8, and 1 John 5:1-4 and 5:18.
- 2:7 The cornerstone in Peter's world was more than a place in which to put some papers. The stone's size determined the size of the building, and the measurements of the stone determined the length and width of the building. Thus it was the all-important stone in the building. See also Matthew 21:42, Mark 10:10, Luke 20:17 and Acts 4:11.
- 2:11a See note at Romans 7:18.
b Read Romans 7:14-25.
- 2:12a The word used here is "the nations", meaning the other nations besides Israel, who were unbelievers. See note at Matthew 6:32.
b See Matthew 5:16.
- 3:9 See Matthew 5:44 and 1 Thessalonians 5:15.
- 3:12 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 3:18 See 1 Corinthians 15:44-46.
- 3:19 This verse speaks of Jesus' descent into

hell, and it's the only place where the Bible speaks of this event.

3:21a See note at Romans 7:18.

b Read Romans 6:3-4.

3:22 See Ephesians 1:20-21.

4:3 See note at Matthew 6:32. Here Peter uses this common word because these people are unbelievers.

4:6 See note at Romans 7:18.

4:7 See note at Acts 2:17a.

4:8a See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

b See Proverbs 10:12 and James 5:20.

4:10 See 1 Corinthians 12.

4:11 See 1 Corinthians 10:31.

4:12 See 1:7 and 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

4:13 See Acts 5:41 and Colossians 1:24.

4:17 See Jeremiah 25:29.

4:18 See Luke 23:31.

5:1 The apostles served as the pastors and officers in the first congregation in Jerusalem. See Acts 6:2-4.

5:4 See the note at 1 Corinthians 9:25.

5:6 See Luke 14:10-11.

5:12 See note at 1 Thessalonians 1:1a.

5:13 See note at Title.

5:14 See note at John 15:5.

2 Peter

Title Peter must have written this letter to the same churches as the first one in about 67 A.D., shortly before his death. Peter was crucified in Rome by Nero. See John 21:18-19a and note at 19.

- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:3 See note at Ephesians 1:17. Peter's frequent use of the words "full knowledge" suggests that this letter was also written to warn his readers against Gnosticism. And like Paul, Peter says that we must seek the full knowledge about the true God.
- 1:7 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1, and notice Peter's distinction here between love for our families and friends and Christian love.
- 1:14 See John 21:18-19.
- 1:17 Peter is talking about the cloud that appeared over the heads of Jesus and His three followers on the Mount of Transfiguration, and God's voice which came out of it (Matthew 17:5). Since God was plainly in this cloud, this must have been the same miraculous cloud, called the "Shekinah", which appeared miraculously to the people of Israel on the night of the exodus (Exodus 13:21-22), and continued with them constantly for 40 years. This cloud was a visible sign of God's presence, and yet it concealed Him from the people.
- 1:19a See picture and note at Matthew 5:15.
- b In the world of Jesus' day the appearance of the morning star announced the coming of the light of the new day. See Luke 21:25-28.
- 2:2 See note at Matthew 21:32.
- 2:4 The place called tartarus in Greek was the same as what we call hell. It was a dark underground cave in which the souls of the wicked were imprisoned and tortured forever for their sins.
- 2:7 See note at Romans 1:17.
- 2:10a See note at Romans 7:18.
- b Here Peter seems to be referring to some insulting things these false prophets had

said about God's prophets, including the apostle Paul, who is mentioned later (3:15)

2:15 See note at Matthew 21:32.

2:16 See Numbers 22:28-30.

2:20 See note at 1:3.

2:21a See note at Matthew 21:32.

b See note at Romans 1:17.

3:3 See Acts 2:17a.

3:7 See Matthew 25:31-46.

3:9 See 1 Timothy 2:4.

3:10a See note at Acts 2:17a.

b See Matthew 24:42-44.

3:12a This is another phrase for "the Lord's Day". But here it means more specifically the Day of Judgment, which we Christians look forward to with great joy, since it will be the day we are taken to heaven to be with God forever. See Matthew 25:31-46.

b Since that Day of the Lord, or Judgment Day, cannot come until the Church finishes its work of spreading the Good News to all the nations (Matthew 24:14), we can all make it come sooner by working harder at our task.

3:13 See note at Romans 1:17.

3:14 See note at John 14:27.

3:15 See Romans 2:4, and compare 3:9.

1 John

Title After Jerusalem was destroyed John, who was probably the only apostle still alive, went to Ephesus and lived there for another 25 years, writing the last 5 books there.

1:1a See John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1-3.

b See John 1:1 and 1:4, and the notes there

about the Word and Life, as picture-words describing Jesus.

- 1:1c This letter must also have been written to warn the believers around Ephesus against the false teachings of the Gnostics, just as Paul's letters to Colossae and the churches around Ephesus (Ephesians). Now John attacks especially the Gnostic false teaching that Jesus didn't have a real human body and was not a real person. This thought runs through this whole letter.
- 1:2 See John 11:25 and 14:6.
- 1:5 See John 8:12 and compare Genesis 1:3.
- 1:6 See note at John 1:5.
- 1:7 See verse 3 above.
- 1:9 This is the meaning of the words "perfectly holy", See note at Romans 1:17.
- 2:1 See Hebrews 7:25b.
- 2:2a This whole phrase beginning "the sacrifice . . . holy anger" is required to translate one Greek word. And that one word sets before us a picture of what happened when the Head Priest entered into the Most Holy Place in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:15-16) and sprinkled the blood of the goat that had been killed for the sins of the people over the golden cover on top of the Agreement Box (see note at Romans 3:-25a). It was all a picture of the great eternal Head Priest to come, who would cover over the sins of the whole world once and for all with His own blood, when He laid down His own life to make one perfect eternal sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (Hebrews 9:1-10:14). And the final result is that God is no longer angry with us!
- b See 3 Corinthians 5:19.

- 2:3a See John 14:15 and 21.
b See John 15:14-15.
2:5 See note at John 15:5.
2:8 See John 1:5.
2:13 See 1:1.
2:15 See note at John 7:7.
2:16 See note at Romans 7:18.
2:17 See 2 Peter 3:10.
2:18a See note at Acts 2:17a.
b See 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 and 8, Daniel 11:36 and 12:11, Matthew 24:15.
c Certainly the Gnostics were included here (see note at 1:1c).
2:20 See picture and note at Acts 4:27. Here John is talking about Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit, whom He "pours" into our hearts when we are baptized and come to faith. See John 14:17, Matthew 3:11 and Acts 11:8.
2:22a See note at Matthew 1:1.
b See John 8:44-45.
2:23 See John 10:30.
2:24 See note at John 15:5.
2:25 See John 17:2-3, 10:28, 6:40 and 5:24.
2:27 See John 14:26.
2:28 See note at John 15:5.
3:6 See note at John 15:5.
3:7 See note at Romans 1:17, and compare 1:9 and 2:29.
3:11 See Leviticus 19:18 and John 13:34.
3:13 See John 15:18.
3:14 See John 5:24.
3:15 See Matthew 5:21-22.
3:18 See James 2:14-17.
3:23a See John 6:29.

3:23b See John 13:34, 15:12 and 17.

3:24a See note at John 15:5.

b See John 14:17.

4:2 See 2:22 and the note at Matthew 1:1.

4:3a See note at 1:1c.

b See 2:18b.

4:5 See John 7:7.

4:10 See note at 2:2.

4:15 See note at John 15:5.

4:21 See Leviticus 19:18 and John 13:34.

5:1 See John 3:3-8 and 1 Peter 1:23.

5:4 See John 16:33.

5:6a See note at Matthew 1:1.

b Notice that here John states that when Jesus was born there was both water and blood. And John is the only one who points out the fact that when Jesus died, a soldier stuck his spear into Jesus' side, and water and blood flowed out. John clearly thought that these two events were of great importance, since they proved that Jesus was not only true God, but also a true man, having true human blood, made up of red cells and clear plasma (water), just as we all have. This was of great importance in dealing with the Gnostics, who claimed that Jesus didn't have a human body at all (see 1:1 and 4:2-3).

c See John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, and compare John 14:6.

5:8 See Deuteronomy 19:15 and Matthew 18:16.

5:11 See John 14:6.

5:13 See John 20:31.

5:16 See Mark 3:28-29.

5:20a See note at John 15:5.

b See John 11:25 and 14:6.

2 John

- 1:1 Since the Greek word for "church" is feminine, this was probably John's way of addressing this particular church in the area of Ephesus.
- 1:5 See John 13:34 and 1 John 3:11.
- 1:6 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 1:7a See note at 1 John 1:1c and read 1 John 2:18.
- b See note at 2 Thessalonians 2:3b.
- 1:13 See note at verse 1.

3 John

- 1:6 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.
- 1:12a Demetrius was no doubt one of the traveling evangelists and teachers mentioned in this letter, perhaps the leader of the group.
- b John meant that Demetrius always told the truth and acted in accordance with the truth.
- 1:15 See note at John 14:27.

Judas

- 1:1a Judas was another of Jesus' brothers (see Mark 6:3), but this is all we know about him. The name is spelled Judah in the Old Testament, and Judas in the New Testament. The translators invented Jude to keep him separate from the apostle Judas.
- b See note at Matthew 1:1.
- c See note at James 1:1a.
- 1:2 See note at John 14:27.
- 1:3 See note at Matthew 27:52.
- 1:6a This refers to the wicked angels who followed Satan when he rebelled against God at some time before the Fall of Adam and Eve. See

Luke 10:18.

1:6b See note at Acts 2:17a.

1:11 See Numbers 16:1-35.

1:12 The love feasts were meals that were held after the communion service, where the richer members brought food which was eaten by everyone present, especially the poor.

1:15 This is a quotation from the apocryphal Book of Enoch, 1:9.

1:18a See note at Acts 2:17a.

b See 2 Peter 3:3.

1:23 See note at Romans 7:18.

Revelation

1:1 See note at Matthew 1:1.

1:4a The 7 churches mentioned here and in chapters 2-3, are the same ones listed in the note at Ephesians 1:1b. But the numbers in Revelation all have special meanings, as we shall see. The number 7 in this book takes its meaning from the fact that the world was created in seven days. Thus any seven pictures complete fullness. And when God told John what to write here, He intended it to be read to all the churches in all countries from the time John received it until the end of the world. The Jews were great on putting special meanings in certain numbers.

b "The One who is" must be God the Father.

c See note at John 14:27.

d The seven spirits in front of the throne are John's picture of the Holy Spirit, who like the Father and the Son is filled with all power, and is everywhere present. So in verses 3-5 we have a picture of the

Triune God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing and everywhere present.

1:7 See Acts 1:9-11, Luke 24:51, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, and Matthew 24:31.

1:8 The Greek says, "I am the alpha and the omega", the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which means, "I am the beginning and the end", calling attention to Jesus' eternal nature. See Isaiah 41:4b.

1:9 Patmos was a small island west of Samos, in the Aegean Sea, NW of Miletus. See map, page 368. John was sent there as a prisoner in the second great attack on the Christians by the Emperor Domitian in 95-96.

1:10a The early Christians called Sunday "the Lord's Day" because Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, and He also poured out His Spirit on the Church on that day (Acts 2:1).

b See Acts 10:10-16 for Peter's similar experience.

1:12 See picture and note at Matthew 5:15.

1:13 See note at Matthew 8:20.

1:17 See note at John 8:24.

1:20 The Greek says, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." But since John is to write letters to these "angels" in chapters 2-3, they must be the pastors of the churches, who are God's appointed overseers (guardian angels) of the churches. Again this is talking about all the pastors.

2:4 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

2:6 The Nicolaitans were followers of Balaam, the ancient prophet who led the Israelites into shameful, immoral practices, including temple prostitution. See Numbers 31:16 and 25:1-2.

2:7 The word used here for garden is paradise, a Persian word for a king's hunting park.

The garden of Eden was a true paradise, but "God's garden" in this verse will be in the new heavens and earth. See 2 Peter 3:13.

2:8 See how this was translated in 1:8, as A & Z.

2:10a Like 7, among the Jews 10 stood for completeness also, since in their decimal system, which is also the basis of our American arithmetic, the number 10 is the "perfect" number, which is repeated over and over again in our numerals - ten, twenty, thirty, etc. Ten days, however, would be a much shorter time period than ten weeks, months, or years, or ages, all of which would be complete periods of time.

b See note at 1 Corinthians 9:25 and James 1:12.

2:11 The "second death" is the sending away of the devil and all unbelievers into hell for all eternity. We call this eternal death. The basic meaning of "death" is separation. See 19:20, 20:10 and Matthew 25:41-46.

2:15 See note at 2:6.

2:16 See 1:16

2:19 See note at 1 Corinthians 13:1.

2:20 Jezebel was certainly the most wicked woman in the Old Testament. See 1 Kings 16:31.

2:24 Jesus is talking here about the Gnostic teachings. See the note at Ephesians 1:9.

3:1a See note at 1:4d.

b See 1:16. This means all the stars.

3:4 The various colors also have special meanings in Revelation. White pictures purity.

3:9 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.

3:12 See 21:2 and 9-26.

3:14 The Hebrew word Amen generally means "yes, this is the truth." But here it is used of Jesus Himself, and means "the faithful and and true One."

- 3:19 See Hebrews 12:6-10.
- 3:20 In Jesus' day inviting someone into one's home for dinner was the highest possible act of friendship. See John 15:14-15.
- 4:4 Another important number in Revelation is 12 and its multiples. 12 is the number of the Church, or God's people. In the Old Testament God's people, the Jews, were divided into 12 tribes. And in the New Testament the leaders of the church were the 12 apostles. Here the 24 older men sitting on 24 thrones, surrounding God's throne, are a clear picture of the whole church, both Old and New testament.
- 4:5 See picture and note at Matthew 5:15 and Revelation 1:4d.
- 4:10 See picture and note at Matthew 2:11a.
- 5:1 See picture and note at Luke 4:17.
- 5:5 Genesis 49:9-10 speaks of Jesus as the Lion from Judah's tribe. The lion has always been recognized as the most powerful of all animals, who always comes out victorious. This is the perfect picture of Jesus, who will finally defeat Satan and his forces.
- 5:6 The lamb is the most gentle and loving of all God's creatures, and therefore was selected as the animal to be used as the sacrifice, who would die to cover the sins of the people of Israel and wash them away. And every lamb sacrificed pointed to Jesus, God's Son, who willingly sacrificed His life to wash away the sins of all men, women and children, leaving them clean and pure in God's eyes. Note that He is pictured here as standing in the middle of the Church.

And notice that He is pictured as having seven horns and seven eyes. The horn among the Jews was the symbol of power, so this

Lamb was all-powerful, and also all-seeing and all-knowing - seven eyes.

6:4 Red, of course also had a special meaning. It pictures war and bloodshed.

6:5a And black clearly pictures sin, dirtiness, and judgment.

b The ancient scales were simple and accurate (see picture). The merchandise was placed in one side, the weights in the other.

6:6 A man ate a quart of wheat a day. And to pay a whole day's wages for that much wheat would mean that there was a great shortage of food, as in time of war or famine. See picture and note at Matthew 22:19.

6:12 Sackcloth was a rough, scratchy kind of very cheap cloth, used only by the poorest people. But when people were in great sorrow they wore such cheap cloth to show their sorrow. See note at Matthew 11:21b.

6:14 See picture and note at Luke 4:17.

7:3 In those days slave owners branded their slaves in the same way that modern ranchers brand their animals with their special brand mark to identify them as their property.

7:4a As we saw in the note at 2:10, 10 is the complete number, since when we get to ten, we go back and do another 10 to 20, etc. But 100 is ten tens, which must picture a greater completeness than 10. And 1,000 is 10 hundreds, which would picture completeness in a still higher level.

The people in the ancient world used what we know as the Roman numeral system, using the letters of their alphabet, and they could number up to 1,000. But this was the highest number they could think of, so that it pictured the greatest completeness imaginable. But they could talk of 144 thousands. And since 12 is the number of the

Church, twelve 12's multiplied would picture the whole Church of all time, both old and new testaments. And 144,000 would picture the total population of all the churches of all time.

7:4b Here Jesus is describing the true "Israel", that is, all those who believe in Jesus, in all nations of all times. For the list here is not an accurate list of Jacob's 12 sons, nor of the 12 tribes that settled the land. The tribe of Dan is not listed here, and is replaced by Levi, which was not included as a tribe originally, since they were the priests and were not given any portion of land, but were scattered among the other 12.

7:14 See Matthew 24:21.

8:6 This seven introduces a small but complete group.

9:1 See note at Luke 8:31.

9:11 Both of these Hebrew and Greek names mean "the Destroyer", that is, the Devil.

11:2 First read the note at 12:14. Then note that 42 months is 3½ years, which explains that the mistreatment of God's people (the holy city) will last for a rather long time - 3½ years, not days, but it will never be complete, which would be 7 years. See Matthew 24:22.

11:7 It isn't clear who this wild animal is. It can't be the devil, but must be some one or ones of the devil's followers who will kill, or have killed 1,000's of Christians. Perhaps the best guess is Mohammedanism, an anti-Christian movement which killed thousands of Christians, including many in Jerusalem, which is mentioned in verse 8. The Mohammedan wars and destruction lasted over 1,000 years.

- 11:19 See Exodus 25:10-22 and note at Matthew 26:28.
- 12:1 The woman pictured here in heavenly splendor must certainly be the Christian church, since her crown has 12 stars, the church's number.
- 12:3 This dragon is easily identified in verse 9. He is pictured here as having complete wisdom (7 heads) and power (10 horns). The horn was the symbol of strength and power among the Jews. And his red color indicates that he will kill many Christians.
- 12:4 This clearly refers to the devil's attempts to destroy Jesus after His birth. See Matthew 2:16-23.
- 12:5 See Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 2:7.
- 12:6 1,260 days = 42 months = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, only half of some particular time period. And pictured here is the first half of the story of the Church - its period of great growth, up to our modern times when evolution, communism and materialism have slowed that growth greatly.
- 12:9 Here John is talking about the devil who came to Eve in the garden of Eden and tricked her into disobeying God (Genesis 3:1-6). But we know he wasn't a snake, with no legs (see Genesis 3:14). And since we don't know what he looked like, it's best to just call him the "old Reptile".
- 12:10 The Greek word "devil" means "the accuser."
- 12:14 The Jews in Daniel's and Jesus' day liked to use numbers as a kind of secret code. Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 talk about "time, times and half a time", which stood for $1+2+\frac{1}{2}$. This equals $3\frac{1}{2}$, picturing something half complete and which never would be completed. So here Jesus says the woman (the Church) will be protected from Satan's attacks for for some incomplete period of time, begin-

- ing with Jesus' birth, perhaps until 600 A.D.
- 13:1 Notice that this was an animal, not a man. and it pictures the whole anti-Christian power. It comes up out of the ocean, from hell below. And it is a powerful thing - 10 horns (symbol of power), and has all knowledge (seven heads). And the 10 crowns indicate that it rules over much or most of the earth.
- 13:5 See note above and note at 11:2.
- 13:17 Both the Greeks and Hebrews used the letters of their alphabets as numbers (a=1, b=2, 11th letter was 20, 19th was 100, etc.). And Jews liked to take the letters of a person's name and change them into numbers and add them up and get that person's "number", which they used to tell fortunes, etc.
- 13:18 666 is a man's number, since man was created on the 6th day. But he would be a very powerful man - 666 - the anti-christ.
- 14:1 See 7:4-8, and the notes there.
- 14:14 See picture at Mark 4:29.
- 14:20 This would be about 200 miles.
- 15:2 See note at 13:18.
- 16:13 See 12:3 and 13:1-18.
- 16:14 See note at Acts 2:17a.
- 16:16 There was no such place as this in Israelite history. The word means "the mountain of Megiddo", which was an old town at the foot of the mountains running SE from Mt. Carmel. To the north and east of Megiddo were the plains of Esdraelon, where many great battles were fought. This is why Jesus used this made-up name as the imaginary site of the great battle to be fought between Himself and Satan on the Last Day.
- 16:21 The Greek reads "weighing a talent", which

was a unit of weight, about 130 pounds.

17:3a See Acts 10:10-16.

b This woman is a picture of the attractiveness of the whole anti-Christian power, and she is pictured as the great prostitute, the mother of all prostitutes.

17:8 This bottomless hole is, of course, hell, and the wild animal is a restored Babylon.

19:9 See Matthew 22:2-3.

19:12 A Persian crown was simply a band of blue and white cloth tied around the king's hat.

19:13 See John 1:1 and 14.

19:15 See 1:16.

19:19 See 17:8.

20:1 See note at 17:8.

20:5b A resurrection is a coming back to life. But since all people are spiritually dead at birth, the first resurrection takes place when a person comes to faith in Jesus or is baptized as a child. It is a spiritual resurrection and the most important of the two resurrections spoken of in the Bible.

The second resurrection is the raising of all human beings back to life at the end of the world to take part in the final judgment. At that time all who believe in Jesus as their Savior will be taken into the new heavens and earth to enjoy Life forever with God and all the angels in perfect happiness.

20:6 Since the first death is the death of the soul, the second death is really the awful life that all unbelievers will have to live forever in hell after the resurrection of all people and the final judgment.

The word "death" really means a separation. In the first death, which we are all familiar with, the soul is separated from the body. In the second death the whole resur-

rected person will live forever separated from God and everything that is good.

20:8 Gog was the king of the land of Magog, mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39, especially in verse 38:2. There the people of Magog are spoken of as special enemies of Israel (God's people), who will be destroyed by God's hand in a miraculous way.

20:10 See 19:20.

20:11a See Matthew 25:31.

b See 2 Peter 3:10 and Matthew 5:18.

20:13 The Greek word used here is Hades, which in Greek mythology was the kingdom of the dead. We would call this the grave, which is the place where all the dead bodies are residing.

21:1 See 20:11.

21:15 See 11:1-2.

21:16 These blocks would measure 660 feet, 8 to a mile. And the city would be 1,500 miles long, wide and high! See 14:20.

21:17 A cubit is 18 inches, from the elbow to the tip of the second finger. The height would be 216 feet - 27 stories high.

22:10 See picture and note at Luke 4:17.

22:14 See 7:14.

22:15 The Jews hatefully spoke of all the people of the other nations as dogs, since they were all unbelievers.

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1:23a Isaiah 7:14
 b Isaiah 8:10
 2:6a Micah 5:2
 b 2 Samuel 5:2
 2:15 Hosea 11:1
 2:18 Jeremiah 31:15
 2:23 Judges 13:5-7
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 3:3 Isaiah 40:3
 4:4 Deuteronomy 8:3
 4:6 Psalm 9:11-12
 4:7 Deuteronomy 6:16
 4:10 Deuteronomy 6:13
 4:16 Isaiah 9:1-2
 5:4 Isaiah 61:2-3
 5:5 Psalm 37:11
 5:8 Psalm 24:3-4
 5:21 Exodus 20:13
 5:27 Exodus 20:14
 5:31 Deuteronomy 24:1
 5:33 Leviticus 19:12
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 5:35a Isaiah 66:1
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 5:38 Exodus 21:24
 5:43 Leviticus 19:13
 8:4 Leviticus 14:2-32
 8:11 Psalm 107:3
 8:17 Isaiah 53:4
 9:13 Hosea 6:6
 10:36 Micah 7:6
 11:5a Isaiah 35:5-6
 b Isaiah 61:1
 11:10 Malachi 3:1
 11:23 Isaiah 14:13-15
 12:7 Hosea 6:6
 12:21 Isaiah 42:1-4
 12:40 Jonah 1:17
 13:15 Isaiah 6:9-10
 13:35 Psalm 78:2
 15:4a Exodus 12
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 15:9 Isaiah 29:13
 16:27 Psalm 28:4
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 18:16 Deuteronomy 19:15

19:4 Genesis 1:27
 19:5 Genesis 2:24
 19:7 Deuteronomy 24:1
 19:19a Exodus 20:12-16
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 21:5 Zechariah 9:9
 21:9 Psalm 118:26
 21:19a Isaiah 56:7
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 21:16 Psalm 8:3
 21:33 Isaiah 5:1-2
 21:42 Psalm 118:22-23
 22:24 Deuteronomy 25:5
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 22:37 Deuteronomy 6:5
 22:39 Leviticus 19:18
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 23:35 2 Chronicles 24:20-21
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 23:39 Psalm 118:26
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 24:30a Zechariah 12:10
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 24:31 Deuteronomy 30:4
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 27:43 Psalm 22:8
 27:46 Psalm 22:1
 27:48 Psalm 69:21

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1:2 Malachi 3:1
 1:3 Isaiah 40:3
 4:12 Isaiah 6:9-10
 6:34 Numbers 27:17
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7:10a Exodus 20:12
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 10:4 Deuteronomy 24:1
 10:6 Genesis 1:27
 10:8 Genesis 2:24
 10:19a Exodus 20:13-16
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 11:9 Psalm 118:26
 11:10 Psalm 118:25
 11:17a Isaiah 56:7
 b Jeremiah 7:11
 12:1 Isaiah 5:1-2
 12:11 Psalm 118:22-23
 12:19 Deuteronomy 25:5
 12:26 Exodus 3:6, 15-16
 12:30 Deuteronomy 6:4-5
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 13:24 Isaiah 13:10
 13:25a Isaiah 34:4
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 13:27 Deuteronomy 30:4
 14:18 Psalm 41:9
 14:27 Zechariah 13:7
 14:62a Psalm 110:1
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 15:24 Psalm 22:18
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 16:11 Luke 24:11
 16:12-13 Luke 24:13-35
 16:14 Luke 24:38-43,
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 16:15 Matthew 28:16-20
 16:16 John 3:18 & 36
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 16:18 Luke 10:18, Acts 28:3-6,
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 16:19 Acts 1:1-9, Matthew
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 16:20 Acts chapters 2-28

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 1:37 Genesis 18:14
 1:47 1 Samuel 2:1
 1:48 1 Samuel 1:11
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 1:69 2 Samuel 7:16
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 1:79 Isaiah 9:2, 58:8, 60:1-2
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 7:27 Malachi 3:1
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 12:53 Micah 7:6
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 19:46a Isaiah 56:7
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 20:9 Isaiah 5:1
 20:17 Psalm 118:22
 20:28 Deuteronomy 25:5
 20:37 Exodus 3:6, 15-16

20:43 Psalm 110:1
 21:26 Haggai 2:6 & 11
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 22:37 Isaiah 53:12
 23:30 Hosea 10:8
 23:34 Psalm 22:18
 23:35 Psalm 22:7-8
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1:23 Isaiah 40:3
 1:51 Genesis 28:12
 2:17 Psalm 69:9
 6:31 Psalm 78:24
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 19:36 Exodus 12:46
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7:10 Genesis 41:37-44
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 7:28 Exodus 2:14
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 7:37 Deuteronomy 18:15
 7:40 Exodus 32:1
 7:43 Amos 5:25-27
 7:50 Isaiah 66:1-2
 8:33 Isaiah 53:7-8
 13:22 Psalm 89:20
 13:33 Psalm 2:7
 13:34 Isaiah 55:3
 13:35 Psalm 16:10
 13:41 Habakkuk 1:5
 13:47 Isaiah 48:6
 14:15 Exodus 20:11
 15:17 Amos 9:11-12
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 7:7 Exodus 20:17
 8:36 Psalm 44:22
 9:7 Genesis 21:12
 9:9 Genesis 18:10, 14
 9:12 Genesis 25:23
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 9:29 Isaiah 1:9
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 10:5 Leviticus 18:5
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 10:13 Joel 2:32
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10:16 Isaiah 53:1
 10:18 Psalm 19:4
 10:19 Deuteronomy 32:21
 10:20 Isaiah 65:1
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 11:4 1 Kings 19:18
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 11:10 Psalm 69:22-23
 11:27 Isaiah 59:20-21
 11:34 Isaiah 40:13
 11:35 Job 41:11
 12:17 Proverbs 3:4
 12:19 Deuteronomy 32:35
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 13:9a Exodus 20:13-17
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 15:3 Psalm 89:9
 15:9 Psalm 18:49
 15:10 Deuteronomy 32:43
 15:11 Psalm 117:1
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1:19 Isaiah 29:14
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 3:19 Job 5:13
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 5:13 Deuteronomy 17:7b
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 6:3 Exodus 20:12
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5:5 Psalm 2:7
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8:5 Exodus 25:40
8:12 Jeremiah 31:31-34
9:20 Exodus 24:8
10:7 Psalm 40:6-8
10:12 Psalm 110:1a
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10:17 Jeremiah 31:34

10:28 Deuteronomy 19:15
10:30a Deuteronomy 32:35
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10:38 Habakkuk 2:4
11:5 Genesis 5:24
11:12 Genesis 15:5, 22:17
11:18 Genesis 21:12
11:23 Exodus 2:2
12:6 Proverbs 3:11-12
12:12 Isaiah 35:3
12:26 Haggai 2:6
12:29 Deuteronomy 4:24
13:5 Deuteronomy 31:6
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1:11 Isaiah 40:6-7
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5:1 Ezekiel 2:10

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6:2 Zechariah 1:8, 6:3,6

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 b Ezekiel 47:12
 22:4a Psalm 17:15
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 22:19 Deuteronomy 4:2
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